

Technique

I

THE ACUTE reader will observe that the text of the book breaks into two parts at this point. The over-acute reader will dismiss the line of cleavage as a typographical flourish—as an effort on the bookmaker's part to break up a bleak expanse of letterpress into negotiable fragments.

It is more than that. Here is a frontier. Entering *Terra nova* upon Part II, you cross a boundary. Part I was an examination of things. And all of the affairs examined were at rest—things standing still—machines under dust cloths; stock on the shelves. At this point the investigation enters upon a new phase. The matters to be examined next are processes—ways of doing things—parts moving. We undertake now to study the ele-

ments of an advertisement in solution—in the act of crystallizing into a settled and final state.

*Terra
incognita*

And not only does the character of the subject-matter change, but the method for conducting the investigation itself will have to be altered also. Part I was a Cook's Tour—not much time to stop and look; more or less what everybody knows or knows about; beaten track, guide-books, maps. Part II traverses *terra incognita*. If we get through at all it will be as a column of exploration. The compiler (serving as guide) will flounder along a trail as long as it looks hopeful, and then abandon it for another—without finding any satisfying fact in either, you may say. There will need to be room for discursive comment, for returns over known ground; there will have to be patience while heaps of platitudes are poled over to see if any helpful hint may be found thereunder. Systematic attack or orderly development cannot be expected under such conditions. We will take things as they come. . . .

*The aim of
Part II*

My purpose in Part II will be to get an answer to the question, How do you design an advertisement? We want to find out how the mind of a layout specialist works; what he does to the material submitted to him and why he does it. We want to know how he starts his process and how he reaches his conclusions; how he knows when the thing suits him; what precepts guide him; why he rejects this and the other possible arrangement of elements and finally settles on that. We ask: "What makes you choose just this particular size of type for the space? Why do you put the picture at the bottom instead of at the top? Just what are you trying to get at, anyway?"

The method of research that I want to use first in pursuit of answers to these questions is a method that might reasonably be deferred to a later place in the series—put aside until various other points in the

problem had been looked into. I inject it here because it helps to clear up bits of technical slang that confuse one if they are left undefined. The method is out of place here at the beginning because it plunges directly into the esthetic department of design—and one would prefer to discuss certain other points first—practical points that are more important.

The method that I want to use first is one employed by students of psychology. The investigator in that science scrutinizes the stream of consciousness in his own mind and tries to find out from its behavior as much as he can about the machinery of thought. I use my own operations as subject-matter because my own mind is the only one I can get at. I have taken a typical piece of work and have asked myself questions about it as I went along. The steps that follow are answers to the questions.

The typewritten copy is spread out, the space ruled off in pencil, or a sheet of paper cut the given size. Study of the space, and of the copy, evokes in the imagination misty images of ways the booklet, or what not, might appear. Some quality of the advertised product, of the people to be interested; some feature of the copy's comment—one of these things provides a first vague hint of the way to begin assembling the material. I see a ghost of a printed result—I make vague scribbles, trying this way and that to draw lines around the image. The "hunch" begins to take on outlines; the first bud puts out other buds that unfold into practicable methods—or else encounter mechanical difficulties and are blighted. Out of the mist a picture emerges, a picture of an arrangement of elements that will serve the turn. I put it to the test of reduction to paper.

I make two or three sketches the full size of the space allotted, in detail. These sketches are a trial-and-error method of finding out how the various parts fit together

*How the
designer
begins to
design*

*Trial
sketches*

and how they fit into the space. I am trying to get an arrangement that will read easily and emphatically and that will also, when glanced at, resolve itself into an interesting pattern. By "interesting pattern" I mean a distribution of paper surface and printed area that catches the eye because it promises to be something unusual.

There are three or four of these rough sketches; one of them makes the best use of the material. Why it "reads" best is not difficult to decide. Why it looks best and is most interesting as a pattern is a more complicated question, one that calls for a parenthetical journey of investigation. But before I take the side trip it will be well to proceed with the sequence of events and finish that.

*Tracing-
paper*

I redraw the sketch that promises the best result upon tracing-paper. I consider more carefully such chances as there are to bring into play interesting pattern. Sometimes, of course, there aren't any; the matter has to be straight solid matter packed tight against the boundaries. All the points about spacing (to be commented on in the deferred discussion) are looked at more carefully and changes made to bring them into better play. The dimensions—margins, leads, etc.—are measured and marked down on the tracing.

*Type
specimens*

By putting type specimen sheets under the paper I am able to tell pretty well what sizes of type will correspond with the roughly penciled lettering of the sketch, and the sizes are written down. In getting at the type sizes in this way my tendency is to get the sizes too large; this has to be looked out for. This layout on tracing-paper goes to the typesetter, and his proof emerges as the first real chance I get to tell what I have done—because I am not expert enough to determine from the layout itself whether or not I have succeeded in measuring the type correctly. The set-up as shown

The proof

by the proof has to be criticized and changed in the metal according to the dictates of the original conception, and then I am confronted by a second proof, which may approximate my intention. The slump under 100 per cent is not chargeable against the compositor. It is the margin between what I want to do and what I am able to do. A second revision and a third proof, etc., may be justified.

Some of the changes made in the first proof raise the question why I want to make any changes at all. What am I changing toward? By what rule do I add or subtract space and color (black) in the hope of improving the design? These questions lead back to the deferred journey of exploration, and I shall now plunge into that.

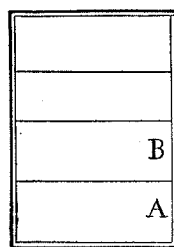
*Why make
changes?*

Everything that passes in front of our open eyes has an effect upon our minds, attractive or repellent. The induced action may be microscopically slight, but the instant that tips the balance one way or the other is a crisis for the manipulator of advertising. Because it is not possible for us to give our attention to every single thing we see—we are obliged to choose out of the passing show what we shall really look at—what we shall let our eyes linger upon, while the rest is permitted to slip by unnoticed. Now these choices of ours, albeit so swiftly made that they are made unconsciously, nevertheless are made under the influence of definite compulsions, simple and universal laws of mental reaction. The designer of advertising has to know the incidence of these laws and to construct his design in such a way that *it* shall be the thing that the observer "chooses" to see.

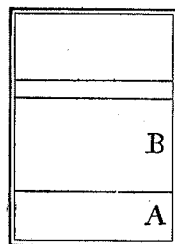
*What we
choose to see*

We know, for instance, that we do not like to look for long at the featureless mile after mile of a flat country (unless we were reared there), or at a horizon of never-ending hills. We seek to avoid the dull, the unstimu-

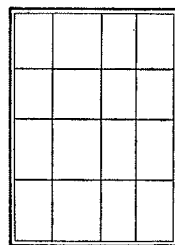
*The charm of
variety*



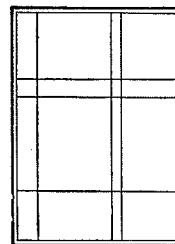
1



2



3



4

lating, the stupefying zone of eternal monotony, world without end. We turn with pleasure to a prospect enlivened by variety because it *promises* something.

Now, mere divisions of space—merely areas in combination, quite apart from any consideration of what they contain, or mean—are stimulating and pleasant, or dull and uninviting. They attract just as variety in a landscape attracts, or repel like the monotony of a desert. How it is possible for mere divisions of space to be stimulating or dull may perhaps be shown by some diagrams in the margin. In (1) the large area is cut into four smaller areas more or less alike. The figure that this makes is all well enough, quiet and unobtrusive. But when you start moving the lines up and down as in (2), you arrive at something which by comparison with (1) is certainly more striking. In (2) you begin to get a pattern that calls attention to itself because it makes A and B different, etc., and there must be some reason for it all—something to be looked into. The effect is increased by adding a set of vertical lines. Obviously (4) has more life and go to it than (3). (3) is regular and settled down and finished, whereas (4) seems to have some notion of *doing* something. It will be noted that the areas in (2) and (4) are emphatically different one from another. They provide a variety and contrast of sizes all done up in one package. Variety and contrast are spicy elements of the “interesting,” whereas monotonous uniformity is *not* interesting.

Everything done in typographic design breaks up a major area into smaller areas. The large area is almost always rectangular. The smaller areas are mainly rectangular. Vignettes, flourished lettering, etc., get away from right angles; curved borders make other than rectangular backgrounds; but the main dividing lines are horizontal and perpendicular. In other words,

typographical design on its “pattern” side is a process of designing with divisions of space—mostly rectangular.

We want to prevent these divisions of space from becoming dull; we want to make them diverting and interesting. If I am placing a heading above a body of type and below a limiting boundary I will look out that my heading is not placed after the monotonous fashion of (5), where the spaces above it and below it are the same. I will try to get variety into the spaces by placing the heading as in (6). The same desirable state of affairs can be brought about all over the field by the same process. There are mathematical systems for determining the size of such spaces—e.g., “dynamic symmetry”—but I shall not undertake to discuss them. What I do is to vary the spaces so that they will not all be the same size, and to regulate the variety of their measurements by some feeling I have for a thing called “rhythm.” The simple varying of them without any particular consideration for a rhythmical scheme provides a certain degree of spice. The spaces will not be juggled blindly, to be sure; certain headings, or what not, will belong to certain sections of body-matter and will gravitate naturally toward their affinities. There is always the logical arrangement to be looked out for.

But emphasis must be laid on the word “rhythm.” It is a most important part of interesting pattern, graphic or otherwise. It is a part of the charm of poetry and of music. Rhythm is the thing that puts life into a design—keeps it from being dead and mechanical. In graphic space design it may be crudely defined as a living ratio or size-relation among various parts. An instance is the series of ratios of areas in the well-proportioned margins of a book. The rightness or “well-proportion” is all in your eye, but it is a definite and positive thing, nevertheless. There are mathematical formulae for getting these proportions—bottom : fore-

*Variety in
typographic
design*

NORTH

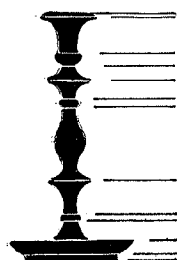
5

NORTH

6

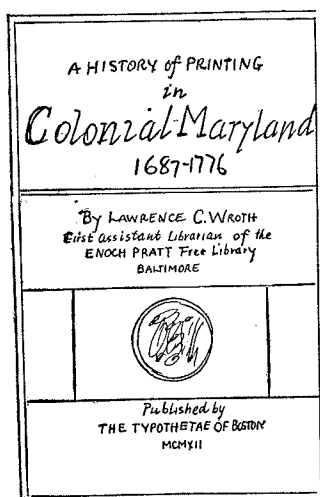
Rhythm



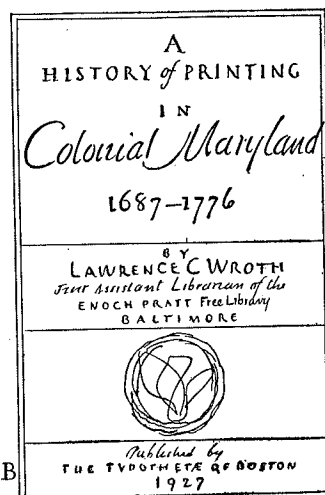


edge :: $x : y$ —but for the liveliest kind of design the artist has to depend upon his own trained sense. The simplest example of rhythm is a pulse beat, or a uniform wave motion, or a picket fence. From that simple beginning you progress by steps of increasing complexity until you arrive at groups of rhythmic relations that are very complex. Notice the diagram of the candlestick; in that diagram there are no two spaces that measure the same, but they are sorted and distributed according to a sense of rhythm that has for its element of charm the same quality that makes a wave motion more interesting than a straight line. There is only one way to acquire a sense of rhythm so far as I know (if it can be acquired), and that is by a critical study of good examples, and by your own trials and failures based thereon, extending over a considerable period of time.

How these points about variety and rhythm of space relate to typographic design may be illustrated by a brace of examples. Diagram A is a student's layout for a title-page, offered for criticism. The adviser pointed out how the panels cut by the horizontal rules were too



A B



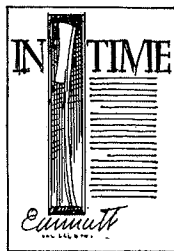
nearly alike in size to make a lively pattern, and how their lack of rhythmic relation one to another produced a major area that was dull and uninteresting. He advised that the panel containing the title of the book—the most important item—be made conspicuously larger than the others, and that the other three vary in size, their measures being determined by a sense of rhythm, as in B.

He pointed out further how the type elements failed to relate spatially to the panels they occupied—how they seemed to have been schemed as a page without rules and then the rules added as an afterthought. And how the two vertical rules in panel No. 3 introduced a faulty pattern element—how they forced the design to expand sidewise at a point where the rhythmic requirements of the pattern demanded a constriction. This need for a narrow element in panel No. 3 grows out of a pulse-beat, or wave-motion, or rhythm, that runs through the design: a *long line*, a short line, a *long line*, a short line, etc.

There is another kind of variety that I want to get into the design: the stimulating effect of sudden change. I have made use of contrasting sizes of areas to liven things up. Now I want to go ahead and use the element of contrast in another way. In this affair we are trying to make things as lively and noisy and conspicuous as we can, and here is one of the means provided. Contrast of *lines* is a kind of optical explosion. Lines that cross each other make a sort of visible crash. Lines that collide at right angles make the greatest possible linear contrast. Assume that there is an element to be worked into the advertisement (possibly a picture of a toothbrush) that makes a long, narrow panel up and down. If the copy permits I can take a part of that and make an emphatic line out of it, cutting it across the upright panel at right angles, in strong linear contrast. Each

Variety via
contrasting
lines





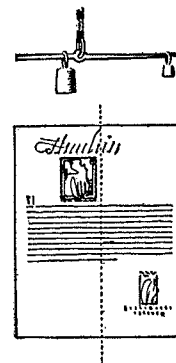
element helps to make the other more conspicuous. If I have no vertical pictorial panel at my disposal I can still produce contrasting lines by running a strong type line across the field and meeting it with the edge of an area of text matter. In such a case it is obvious that I will avoid gaps and indents in the said edge. And I will continue the line of the edge above the strong type line if I can by means of an ornament or a picture or a word. It will be observed that all these lines under discussion are not lines actually existing. They may be imaginary lines that connect conspicuous features of the design—the dotted lines of the comic strip, extending from the protagonist's eye to the cranium of the victim. Lines contrived in this way (by placing conspicuous elements in the requisite positions) not only tie the design together—provide unity—but contribute their own share to the general gayety, particularly if they are lines on a slant. The diagram shows how a line that runs from the heading to the signature serves to locate the beginning of the paragraph. It shows, too, how this imaginary slanting line and the slanting lines of the italic heading act together to produce a vigorous contrast, hence a conspicuous pattern. There is still another kind of contrast to be brought into play—contrast with surrounding matter which will be discussed in connection with newspaper advertising.

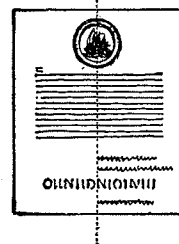
Unity We turn next (still pursuing our quest of the things that make an advertisement attractive and interesting) to a subject that moves to a much quieter *tempo* than the last, namely, *unity*. The word “unity” may not make any sharp picture in the mind. These bits of technical slang have a way of going fuzzy at the edges. . . . I want to make my design so that it neither scatters itself aimlessly all over the field, nor rambles off into contiguous areas and attaches itself to matter

owned by other proprietors. In other words, I want to give the design unity. The simplest way of doing this is to make a centered, symmetrical arrangement within a border of white paper or ornament—drive a stake down in the middle of the field and tie everything to it. Such a symmetrical design achieves unity—at the expense of certain other valuable qualities. Symmetry is static—that is to say quiet; that is to say, inconspicuous. Furthermore, it does not give much chance for the development of irregular areas—and irregular areas are assets. But notwithstanding the quietness of a symmetrical arrangement—because of it, in fact—there are many kinds of advertisements, or parts of advertisements, that are best thrown into this symmetrical form. They are best in a symmetrical form in such cases because then they contrast vividly with surrounding matter that is not symmetrically disposed.

Irregular patterns are assets—but even irregular patterns need some kind of balance within the field of the design. Otherwise they would not have any organic structure at all. There is a kind of unsymmetrical balance that can be used to ballast the design and still give a chance for all the irregularity that I may desire. This irregular kind of balance has been known for a long time as the “principle of the steelyard”—where a heavy weight near the fulcrum balances a light weight out on the end of the beam. The diagram shows how this principle applies to typographical layout.

The steelyard idea applies also to the balancing of color. You will notice that “color” in typography usually refers to degree of blackness. The desirable qualities of variety, contrast, and unity can all be worked out in terms of color as well as in terms of space. The diagram shows how a small spot of “color” will balance an extensive area of gray type matter.





The axis of top-and-bottom balance in a rectangle of printing crosses the space a little above its center. You can test this trick of the eye, that sees the optical center a little above the mathematical center, by looking at a type character "s" upside down. The vertical axis of balance on the page of a book or of a folio is displaced a trifle toward the hinge side of the page, as though the opposite page exerted a gravitational pull. In other cases the axis is at the center.

The designer who laps one area over another is aiming at unity. Unity can be accomplished by means of a predominant line or a predominant area. This device is useful in the case of a composition that is made up of a number of small dissimilar elements. If one of the parts—letterpress or picture—can be made to lord it over the rest, and all the others be kept to a more or less uniform size, the design will "hold together." Or if a predominant line can be struck and the parts "flagged out" from that, this (optical) line will stiffen the heterogeneity into discipline.

Unity is, in a way, a weapon of defence—against surrounding competitive matter. It is more valuable, therefore, in such things as small newspaper advertisements than in mailing-pieces and matters of that kind which work in less violent surroundings. It is a fine, gentlemanly trait, however, under any conditions. Unity contributes orderliness and coherency and a civilized state of things generally. Whereas the Contrast family are all savages, more or less. The desirable thing in advertising, as in life, is a nice balance between civilization and a state of nature.

Such are the blaze-marks along the first trail into *terra incognita*. If the adventure has been worth while it will have turned up rough indications of the meaning of Variety, Contrast, Balance, Symmetry, Rhythm, Unity, etc., and will have hinted at the relation of these

esthetic abstractions to the problem of typographic design.

II

THE INSTANT an advertisement enters active life it has to meet a crisis—the most critical in its career—it has to manage that it shall infallibly be *seen*. It has to thrust itself full in the eye of a reluctant percipient, an individual who does not want to look at it at all. In the existing state of the craft the designer will do well to assume (in spite of what the publicity specialist tells him to the contrary) that the person at the other end of his equation is reluctant, surfeited with beauty, dull to the most seductive argument, fed up. The general "recipient" public may not be as weary of advertising as all that—it may, indeed, buy the periodical for the sake of the advertisements alone. Nevertheless, the assumption of a bored audience is a good base line for the designer to start from. His first problem, then, is to make his advertisement superlatively *conspicuous*. How is it done?

The second crisis follows immediately upon the heels of the first. Having snatched the person's attention for an instant, the advertisement has to be ready to recite its piece glibly, easily, without halts or stammering. The letterpress has to move upon greased ways. The designer's second problem is to make his arrangement of words and pictures superlatively *legible*. How does he do it?

Answers to these two questions, if they may be obtained, will go far to furnish the designer's handbook. Such answers would traverse the whole field of practical advertising design. Visibility and legibility are the prime practical virtues of the graphic side of advertising. The other virtues that may be demanded—

Conspicuous

And legible

distinction, authority, vernal freshness, grace—have to be grafted upon that prime twin stalk. With visibility and legibility accomplished, a design may be rustic and uncouth, but it will still be effective advertising.

In the next section of criticism I want to hold up these two qualities, one at a time, by the side of the various products of advertising design in their order, and see how the qualities apply to those products. For this procedure it will be necessary to split advertising products into the groups that are already ordained in the profession—"space" advertising, "direct" advertising, etc.—because the two virtues apply differently in the various classifications. We may begin with the "conspicuous" feature, and with "space."

SPACE ADVERTISING

"SPACE" is to be studied in two grand divisions: newspaper advertising and periodical advertising. For the purpose of this criticism the term "periodical" is assumed to cover all recurrent publications other than newspapers. The first section of this consideration of space advertising is concerned with newspapers. It will reach to a greater length than the sections that follow it, because various topics pertaining to the whole range of printed advertising will need to be taken up—and once they are up they may as well be disposed of.

Newspapers

Contrast THE great lever for prying up a newspaper advertisement to the level where it will "stick out" is *contrast*. As has been mentioned above, a newspaper advertisement has to do its work in the midst of uproarious surroundings, and the degree of contrast necessary to override the uproar is extreme.

The terms are fixed: gray ink on gray paper, smudgy

presswork, rectangular area in the middle of a shouting mob. Here you have competition for attention raised to the *n*th power—competition not only with rival venders, but with the insistent news of the moment, and with time.

Go beyond the bounds of probability; imagine a condition that would compel an advertisement to be seen, beyond any possible chance of its being passed over; imagine an advertisement printed in *color*, alone in sixteen pages of black type. Such a presentation could not possibly be missed by anyone who turned the pages. That is the ideal toward which the designer strives—a design in color in a newspaper otherwise drab. How shall he approximate it in black ink?

An ideal: how approximate it?

We are shouting into pandemonium. The first means that presents itself for making an advertisement stand out above the din is to shout louder than anybody else—to use larger areas of black than the next man, fatter types, more ink. But the uproar is so great already that another noise added only increases the confusion. Coherent phrases cannot be maintained at such a pitch and remain coherent. A catchword, possibly—three words shouted in 142-point wood type on a broad field—but are three words adequate for the presentation? Rarely.

By blackness?

Or big space—overwhelming area, full-page, double-page spread—drown them out with size. This is an expedient possible only to the exceptional appropriation—and even then the result is open to question. There is a limit to size. (Salesmen of newspaper space will not agree, but I think that it is true.) A consideration of Machiavellian subtlety enters here. The prime element of newspaper display is contrast—and you need to have something to contrast *with*. The facile designer, calling up before his mind's eye a picture of the average newspaper page, makes that agglomera-

By size?

tion itself serve his turn. He uses it as a background upon which to project his own organized, suave, coherent presentation. He creates a civilized garden in the midst of the jungle. The surrounding discord serves to make his harmony the more enthralling. By contrast.

Full page When the campaign does call for domination by size of space, the space can well stop short of full page. This for reasons quite apart from those that ask to be "next to reading matter." To be imbedded in surrounding matter is not the worst fate that can befall an advertising field—if the layout man is apt in cultivating his allotment. There are occasions when full-page space is used to advantage—the occasions of a local retail store that presents its wares in the form of a catalog to a public already interested. But the same retail store, if it attempts to move some special article, will probably use two columns.

How does the facile designer proceed? What are the qualities that throw his arrangement into sharp contrast with its surroundings? One of the qualities is unity of design.

Unity again “Unity in variety” shouts the esthete—and means by that cryptic phrase that you do a good thing if you get the members of an edgy committee to work together as a comfortable whole. “Variety in unity” is the other side of his slogan—and by that he means that you do an equal service if you take an affair that has a barren and oppressive “oneness” about it and get some saving variety and interest into it. Unity of design in advertising layout means the result you achieve if you succeed in “tying together” the parts of an advertisement so that none of them is left out in the cold. If you can manage them so that they all strike the observer’s eye at once as “the Smiths,” and not as a man and a woman and three adolescents, you have achieved unity

of design and (as newspapers go) some degree of conspicuousness.

The layout man, in pursuit of this unity of design, has to think not only of the arrangement within the boundaries of his space, but of other vociferous affairs going on outside in all four directions. He may achieve an arrangement that has the unity of a Republican National Convention when viewed by itself upon his drawing-board; but when it is put into position in a newspaper, a vehement competitor above or below may snatch off large portions of it. For example, a long one-column advertisement with two or three foci of interest may hang together bravely by itself—but when it appears in the news, a neighbor below has appropriated one of the thrilling foci for his own!

The material of a news advertisement usually falls into one of a limited number of classes;

Type I. An arresting item, an argument or description, and a signature. The arresting item will be either a word or phrase displayed in large type, or a picture, or both; the argument an area of more or less uniform letterpress; the signature a line or two of displayed type.

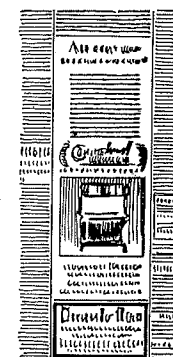
Type II. A variety of small items with headings, and a variety of small pictures, plus signature—the usual department-store advertisement.

Type III. Two or more items of arrest, usually pictures, with an area of letterpress and a signature.

Type IV. A large picture occupying the whole space, with a sentence of argument and the name of the article or firm.

Type V. The letterpress of the argument itself used as an arrest, with subordinated signature.

North, east,
south, west



How many?

Five
classes of
advertisements

In addition to these, one may list the multitude of simple announcements or "cards" where the name of the institution operates as an arrest and stands alone, or is supported by a paragraph of explanatory text. A count of the major advertisements of these types in an issue of a newspaper provides the table:

Type I.	Arrest, argument, signature.....	115
Type II.	Distributed small items.....	25
Type III.	Two or more arrests, etc.....	2
Type IV.	Large picture and a few words.....	5
Type V.	The text as an arrest.....	10

Unity in Type I For Type I the most elementary rule to be observed in pursuit of unity of design is to hold the parts to a 1, 2, 3 or *graded* order of emphasis—*i.e.*, to see that the three elements do not make three separate and *equal* bids for attention, through their size or "color," but that the three work together to make one complete impression. The order of emphasis (1 being the most emphatic) will usually be, arrest 1, signature 2, argument 3.



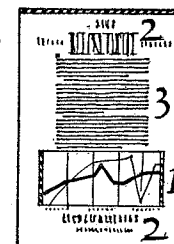
Speaking generally, to overstress an element specifically to arrest attention is to admit that the arrangement is weak. The whole design, as a unit, should perform the arresting function. But an overemphatic element, a part vigorous enough to threaten the unity of the whole, may be good design if it helps the argument along. You may want to say "biff" at just that place; it may be vital to the "message" to do so. But to use a picture solely to catch the eye—a picture that has no direct bearing on the argument—is dubious practice.

Consider next the spatial distribution of the elements in Type I; how shall you place them to make a unit out of them? The most obvious way is to center them

one below another. Symmetrical balance—*i.e.*, static—*i.e.*, *quiet*. But do not dismiss this scheme as ineffective because it is quiet. A region of quiet in the midst of the gyrations of a band of whirling dervishes may be transcendently conspicuous. Static symmetry is one way to bind the three parts together. There are other ways, more dynamic but yet within the bounds of unity—methods to be discussed in the section devoted to "Map."

Which element at the top? This depends on the logical sequence of the copy. If the arresting picture is in the form of an explanatory diagram it may need to come after the argument. Usually the "arrest" will be at the top because that is where you want the reader to start reading. In most cases under Type I the arresting item is a picture and a displayed phrase working together to strike the keynote and establish the atmosphere; so in most cases the arresting item logically stands at the top.

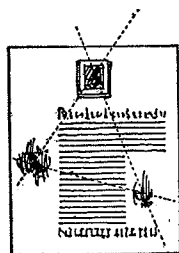
Type II—full page, or approaching full page—makes no call upon unity of design for defensive purposes. The advertisement is conspicuous because of its size. In this case a unified scheme serves another purpose; it organizes the diversified material so that the reader can easily find what he wants. Retail-store big-space "catalog" advertising has its own peculiar layout problems and its own specialists. The work has to be done at top speed, on a twenty-four hour basis; the material is heterogeneous and constantly changing. A specific style is worked out and adhered to, somewhat after the fashion of a periodical—specific type face and specific style of pictures. When this is done the kind of unity we are discussing really does operate, not in any single presentation, perhaps, but as a series, by cumulative effect. The element of elapsed time enters the game as a unifying principle. The retail-



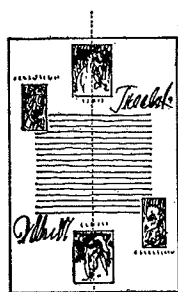
Unity in Type II

store specialist organizes his material into a unit so far as he is able, sometimes by using a large feature to dominate, sometimes by means of a grill of rules that cut the space into boxes, sometimes by a dominating signature.

Unity in Type III



Type III—where three or four points of interest are distributed about the field—caters to a jaded appetite. If one juicy bit fails to spring the eye-trap, there are others to fall back upon. If pretty girls, on the right, are not enough to catch your attention, then the cut of the product in action (at the left) is brought into play. Although these various attractions are intended to operate one by one, nevertheless they need to be arranged with some consideration for the looks of the design as a whole. They need to be placed so that they toss the attention back and forth among themselves. This means that the pattern they make when seen all together will be a triangle or some other polygonal closed figure. The (optical) lines that connect such scattered points of interest can be further used to direct the eye to an important point in the text. Symmetry may be invoked to help keep the design from scattering. Or one of the interesting features can be made large and the others kept to a uniform smaller size—hen-and-chickens.



Symmetry

Unity in Type IV—a large picture filling the whole space—takes care of itself.

And in the fifth type—the letterpress working as an arrest—there is not much danger of the attention being scattered.



Hen and chickens

In any of these types a uniform border of white space provides a certain degree of unit effect; but this method is used so often that the result lacks tang—and white space is too valuable a means for making a design conspicuous in other ways to use it for mere frame. An ornamental border—rules or decoration—is the most

obvious (and commonplace) means for tying together the straying elements of a design. A border so used is open to interpretation as a signal of distress—an admission that the discordant interests cannot be held together in any other way.

Unity of design is the first means considered for making an area stand out on a page. It operates by contrasting an orderly type arrangement with surrounding matter that is *not* orderly. It depends for its effect upon a normal state of typographic depravity in newspaper advertising. As the general standard rises, the effectiveness of “unity” as a means for making an advertisement conspicuous will diminish.

Unity of design—making sure that the whole arrangement “hangs together” as a single object—is, in general, a negative and static means for accomplishing the conspicuous. Another, and more active, means is the use of what may be called internal, or structural, contrast—contrast within the design itself. All type matter is built upon a framework of lines that are rigidly perpendicular and horizontal. The pull of gravity seems to operate as strongly in the construction of a type page as in the erection of a house. Type structure is architectonic—*i.e.*, the insistent, inescapable lines are up-and-down and across.

In such a structure any line that slants away from the perpendicular, or that curves, is immediately conspicuous. Italic is used for emphasis in solid matter because it departs from the perpendicular. Anything, therefore, that can be put into position to provide slanting lines in an advertising field makes that field conspicuous—by contrast with the architectonic lines of the page in general. An ingenious advertiser sometimes cants his matter so far out of the perpendicular that it turns over on its side—and becomes architec-

*Contrast
within the
design*

Slanted lines

tonic again! But his ingenuity is misapplied. The half-inverted matter is conspicuous, unquestionably, but the reader is disgruntled by the need to turn the page around to see what it is about, and retaliates by passing on without further notice.

Caution

While such extreme gyrations are undesirable, it is still true that an advertisement can attract attention and earn a part of its pay by striking unusual attitudes. The trick in this gesticulating is to make the slanting lines out of organic parts of the material, not to introduce meaningless lines or flourishes merely for the sake of contrast. The meaningless lines attract attention, true—but anything the eye speeds to in an advertisement needs to *mean something*—otherwise there is lost motion and (infinitesimal) chagrin on the part of the victim.



The slanting lines that the layout man devises are not necessarily actual printed lines. They may be optical lines produced by placing conspicuous parts of the advertisement in given places. On the other hand they may be actual lines, edges of pictures, tails of letters, etc. At some risk of confusing the reading, the designer frequently disposes lettering in curves or tilts it drunkenly. The method is effective, but it needs to be used with discretion. And when the fashion prevails to tilt *all* advertisements over like ships in a seaway, the wise designer makes his own affairs conspicuous by holding them to a strict perpendicularity. Script lettering (*i.e.*, writing, in distinction from italic type) is conspicuous on a newspaper page; it departs widely from the rectangular, architectonic lines of the page.

The layout man in the active pursuit of his duty does not start by making a list of all the virtues that an advertisement ought to have—unity, contrast, etc.—and then set out to achieve them one by one. He works

all over the field at once and uses whatever comes easiest to hand. The effort toward unity is at the back of his mind, of course, and he is aware of the help that contrast gives him; but his process is a rough-and-tumble, rule-of-thumb process, rather than a cool and orderly conquest of clearly envisaged problems.

The result that he really wants to get—by whatever means he can lay hold of—is a highly individualized design, an arrangement of type and pictures that will not look like any other arrangement that exists or has existed. He wants to make an advertisement so personal that all eyes turn to it the instant it comes into the field of view—just as all eyes turn to a striking individual the moment that individual enters a room.

His ideal advertisement has a *presence*, a physiognomy, strikingly personal features—a combination of visual characteristics that I group under the general term “map.” I might even verge upon the slang of a bygone day and say that my “map” means physiognomy. But I am thinking, rather, of the map of the geographies. I am thinking of the unmistakable coast line that makes Italy always Italy—a bounding contour that strikes the eye at once as something significant. A characteristic and lively “map” is the conspicuous graphic quality *par excellence* for your newspaper advertisement. You may call it “pattern” if you prefer; pattern in the ornamental sense, a silhouette on a background. It is conspicuous because it is organic and alive—not merely ink casually distributed.

The map simile is misleading at one point: it concentrates all the attention upon the area of letterpress. Letterpress is only one-half the problem. The areas of water on our metaphorical map are as important as the land. The pattern that we contemplate is made up of areas of letterpress and areas of blank paper. “White space” needs to be manipulated as craftily as printed

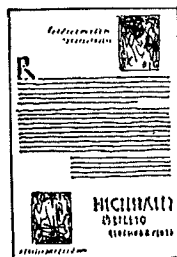
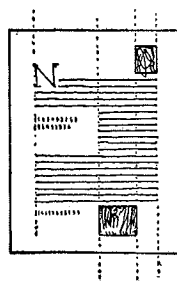
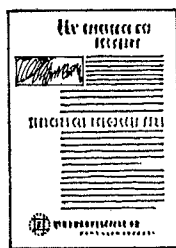
Desideratum

“Map”

*Blank paper
important*

surface. The pattern is formed by white areas interplaying with areas of type—by “counterchange.” Here a peninsula of letterpress reaches out into the paper ocean, there an inlet of “white space” invades the land. This give and take between text and paper is the game that the designer directs to produce his characterful and conspicuous silhouette.

*Logical
import
shapes the
map*



The game is directed—the indentations in the coast line of the map are not made arbitrarily or haphazard. Each cape and bay is there for good reasons. Your eye is on the pattern all the time—you are endeavoring always to shape that characteristic and distinguishing trace which shall make the profile different from all other profiles—but the words in type that are your graphic materials, and particularly the *logical import* of those words, determine the variations of the contour. The words of a particular line, say, are of high importance in the development of the argument. Unless they are seen and read, the whole advertisement misses fire. The thing to do is to dredge away surrounding tidal flats and make a headland out of the line's beginning—thrust it out in emphatic hanging indention—and keep the neighboring areas clear. Breaks that run back into the text do the same work toward forcing attention upon an important locus: paragraphs indented *in toto*, important phrases with gaps in front of them that act as fingers pointing. . . . The bays and promontories need to be emphatic changes in the line. Slight indentations are worse than none—feeble variations in the line suggest timidity, lack of assurance, make slack and flabby patterns.

These strenuously changing outlines are held to the desirable unity by controlling lines that govern the indentions. The furthestmost extension to the left at the top may set the line for the beginnings of other portions of text below, etc. Sometimes the controlling

lines can be run on a slant, and so contribute contrast with the perpendicular type structure.

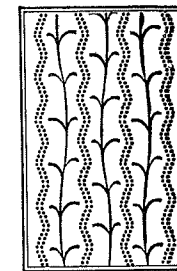
The text areas and paper areas of the map need to be fairly simple. A “big” pattern—*i.e.*, a pattern made out of few and simple shapes—is more conspicuous than a niggled and complicated pattern. Unless the allotted space is large it is unwise to break up the continent into archipelagoes.

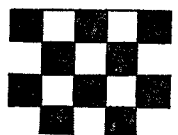
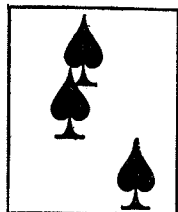
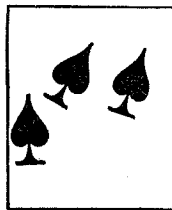
This question of “map” is so important that it warrants examination in greater detail. An advertisement's ability to catch the eye depends more upon its “map” than on any other feature. When a reader's eye lights upon an advertisement, his mental response is favorable and he is attracted, or he is repelled, or he is indifferent and passes by. What happens at this critical instant may be called the question of “primary contact and reaction.” The reaction, whatever tone it may take, is caused (1) by an *idea* conveyed by word or picture, and (2) by the general appearance of the advertisement *as a pattern* of light and dark areas, without any concern for what the pattern means. One might almost say that the pattern part of the process works first—that the reader's eye is caught by *spots* in the first flash of perception and is attracted or repelled, and that he then takes cognizance of words and their meaning.

I have talked about a *conspicuous* pattern and an *attractive* pattern: I shall now try to explain what these expressions mean to me. By “pattern” I do not mean a form to be followed in cutting out a coat or casting a machine. I mean pattern in the wall-paper sense. In this sense you may think of pattern without any ornamental or decorative correlatives at all. The firearms specialist talks about the pattern that shot makes when a shotgun is discharged—the pattern is good or bad for him, accordingly as the shot scatters or bunches.

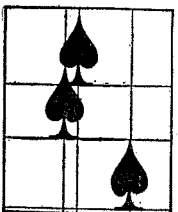
Simple map

*What catches
the eye?*





*Pleasant
pattern*



The conspicuousness of pattern for advertising purposes occurs, first, within these entirely nonesthetic limits. The *pleasantness* of pattern steps over the line into another department, the department of ornament or decoration.

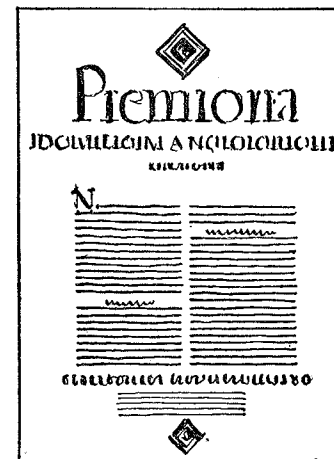
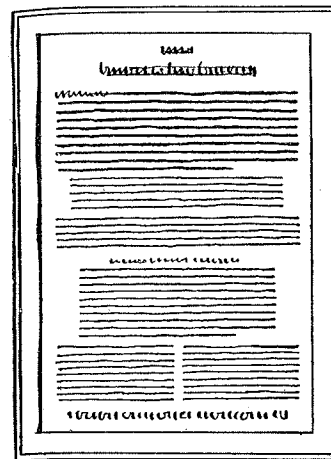
One thing that makes pattern conspicuous (waiving the decorative function) is the hint of *order*, rational purpose, behind it. Lines and splotches may occur in nature scattered hit or miss; they are not conspicuous. Let them be arranged in patterns—on a leaf, on a wing, on a zebra's flank—you see them. Here are three pips in a frame. They attract attention on account of their individual outlines—their own inherent patterns—but not as a pattern. When they are rearranged with some concern for the map of the rectangle as a unit, they are themselves more conspicuous and they make the whole arrangement conspicuous.

A pattern (nonesthetic) often suggests motion; motion is a sure eye-trap. Anything moving in a window display always obstructs traffic. Checker-board pattern attracts the eye like a flame at night. Its sharply contrasted areas, arranged with obvious intention, cannot be passed by.

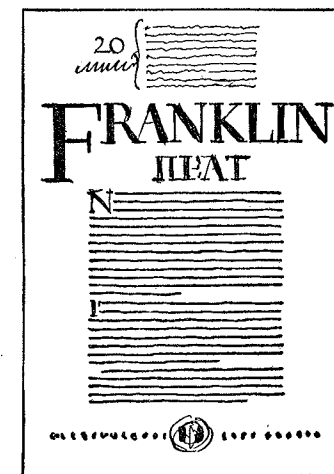
Opposite are two newspaper advertisements. The first is hardly more visible than the matter that surrounds it; the second leaps out of the page.

This first bearing of pattern upon advertising design ignores the decorative function; its main purpose is to catch the eye. But one can go further and make pattern attractive for another reason (without sacrificing any of Effect No. 1). This second line of effort produces pattern that pleases as music pleases, or the rhythm of poetry. Its underlying structure is hard to demonstrate. The point was touched upon lightly in a previous section. One may hint at it here by using the diagram of the pips again, and pointing out that the elements

are placed with an idea of making the spaces between them and around them rhythmically pleasant spaces.



Here are two more advertising maps. The pattern of the first is heavy, awkward, unsatisfying from an orna-



mental point of view. The second is assembled in such a way that all the printed areas and their varieties of

"color" and all the blank spaces work together to produce a kind of space music.

Legibility There looms up now the question of *legibility* at large. We have done what we could to make the arrangement conspicuous. This matter of legibility has been pressing all the while—insisting (with propriety) that unless the affair is legible it doesn't matter how conspicuous it is. The legibility consideration has been forced into second place, but it by no means warrants a secondary rating in the scale of advertising virtues.

Legibility is a question of types and of the position of types. It begins with the type face itself. The first query of the problem is, What type faces are most legible? It is feasible only to touch upon that controversy, and so far as it was feasible it was touched upon (delicately) in the section of the chapter on Apparatus devoted to type.

Via arrangement In this present discussion of technique the question stands, How do you *arrange* type so that it shall be legible? The answer will consist of a few scattered deductions. The ground is debatable, and the deductions are naturally personal to the deducer. They seem to be true. And (also in parenthesis) be it noted that they apply to the discussions of other kinds of advertising that follow as well as to the case of newspaper advertising.

Caps vs. lower-case It is assumed by the advertising craft that lower-case is more legible than capital letters, and that roman is more legible than italic. The assumption is based on the fact that people are more used to reading lower-case in upright roman, and less accustomed to italic type and to matter set in capitals. It will undoubtedly hold true for body matter; it is open to debate in the case of displayed matter. Displayed lines are sometimes set all in lower-case, without capitals where they would naturally occur. The method serves for one displayed

word in large type; used extensively it contributes a factitiously naïve tone that is not always pleasant.

One facet of the problem of legibility is the question *Scale* of *scale*. It will be found by trial and error that certain sizes of type letters work best in certain sized areas. If the scale of the letters is too large for the field in which they appear, the resultant composition is clumsy and gross. Not only does the appearance of the design suffer, but violence is done to the reading process itself. Reading type set too large is as unpleasant as listening to a raucous voice in a small room. Type too small for the space is offensive, but not so offensive as type too large. The sin of type too small is the relatively in-offensive vice of whispering so low that you cannot be understood. It is not always possible to avoid offense on the small side, because one is often compelled to pack more matter into a prescribed space than the space will comfortably hold.

Another question associated with "scale" is "break-back." It seems that for any given size of type there is a certain length of line that fits the eye comfortably. The comfortable fit has to do with the action of jumping back from the end of a line to the beginning of the next line. The ease of this action depends, too, upon the amount of "lead" or space between lines. It seems (I tread cautiously) that for type matter set in the normal way—*i.e.*, set rather solidly, in 12 point or thereabout—if there are 50 or 55 characters in the line (counting spaces as characters), the eye can negotiate the leap to the next line without difficulty; but that if there are more than the critical number of characters, the confused optic stumbles. If it is necessary for the lines to be longer than the critical length, then one must separate them more with wider leading. For small type solid set the critical number of characters is less than

 *Texture*
Wrong

 *Texture*
 *Texture*
Right

55. As the size of the type increases above 12 point, the "break-back" problem diminishes in importance.

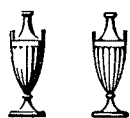
Scale of texture

When rules, or ornaments, or pictures in line are used in conjunction with type, the good appearance of the piece will depend upon a proper regulation of the scale of *texture* between type and ornament. Faults of texture scale destroy the suavity of the design; falsely scaled parts refuse to settle into the general scheme; they stand out as accidental blots.

The type face sets the texture scale. The strokes of some kinds of type characters meet each other crisply and sharply; the strokes of other kinds flow together like liquids. The thick-and-thin strokes of some fonts do not vary strikingly in weight; in other faces the strokes are sharply contrasted in thickness. These characteristic details need to be echoed in the lines of the ornament or picture. The rule does not imply that there should be no solid blacks in such designs; it means that the line parts of a drawing—the gray parts—need to harmonize with the linear characteristics of the type with which it is used. There is no texture relation between type and half-tones, so in the case of half-tones no problem of texture scale arises.

aa

sharp soft



nn

Bodoni Garamond

Indention

Indention is an aid to legibility. The space made by indention at the beginning of a paragraph is a device for attracting attention. The first few words of a paragraph are (or should be) important. People, reading casually, try the first few words, and then—if the text is not particularly succulent—drop to the next paragraph and try that. The entrance into a paragraph, therefore, needs to be vigorous.

Leaded paragraphs

A method of entrance more emphatic than the usual 1-em indent is achieved by inserting more leads between paragraphs than occur between lines of the text. This device is practicable if the story of the text breaks up into sections that are not much related one

to another. But if the sense of the copy is continuous from paragraph to paragraph—if the story runs right along—the leaded breaks are too emphatic—they make the reading bumpy. Leaded paragraphs do not help the looks of the page.

Left to his own devices, the average compositor will indent the first line of a body of text. The first word of the first line is *the* critical word of that particular body of text. Let it start flush, at least. Granted that indention attracts attention, but not to the first line, because the force of blank space is dissipated here by the much larger blank area above the line. Reinforce the first line, by an initial dropping into the text or sticking up above it, by caps and small caps, by jutting the line out beyond the body-matter—at least by starting it flush with the text.

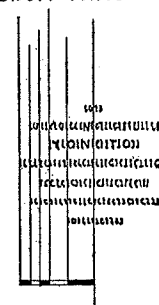
If there are two lines of displayed matter that tend to arrange themselves as a longer and a shorter line, do not space out the shorter line to make it come even with its mate. Lay hold of the chance for variety that the uneven lengths provide and let the lines have their natural spacing. *Naturalness* is a key word. The gaps that vary the edge of a body of displayed matter set long and short make a valuable pattern—for catching the eye. But it is not commendable practice to juggle lines into the shape of a vase; it is not natural for type to fall into the form of a vase.

Letter-spacing is to be applied to capitals, only—not to lower-case, or to black letter (Old English). Letter-spacing is an ornamental device. It does not increase legibility. It makes a decorative pattern, if you want pattern.

There is a general tendency, in setting body matter either by hand or on a machine, to get more space between words than is convenient to the eye. It is easier to do it that way; but the practice not only

First line flush

Long and short lines



Letter-spacing

Word spacing

makes a page of type appear moth-eaten, but it interferes with ease of reading—the type stutters.

*The logic
of the copy*

One mentions a “logical arrangement.” Logic, in this somewhat careless use of the word, is synonymous with “common sense”—the common-sense arrangement—*i.e.*, arrangement that supports and emphasizes the meaning of the words. If you have a heading that reads, “Shoot, if you must, this old gray head,” one avoids the form:

SHOOT IF
you must this old gray
HEAD

no matter how desirable it may be for pattern purposes. One says:

SHOOT
IF YOU MUST
this old gray
head

*Newspaper
type
equipment*

How do the materials and processes that enter into the making of a newspaper advertisement influence the process of design? More than half the advertisements in newspapers are set in the newspaper's own composing-room. Each paper has its own outfit of job types—usually an inheritance from progenitors, with scant addition from time to time to bring it “up to date”—a remarkable collection assembled according to a scheme that no rational mind can penetrate. Here is the equipment of a metropolitan daily:

MACHINE SET

Antique Bookman, 6-12	Century Bld. Ital., 8-24
Antique Bookman Ital., 6-10	Cheltenham Bld., 8-18
Bodoni Book, 12-14	Cheltenham Bld. Ital., 8-10
Bodoni Book Ital., 12-14	Cheltenham Bld. Cond., 8-24
Century Bld., 5½-24	Cheltenham Cond., 8-18

Cond. Gothic, 5½-60
Erbar, 24-30
Franklin Gothic Bld., 6-24
Med. Gothic, 8-14
Nicholas Jensen Ital., 18-24
Old Style Cond., 5½-18
Poster Bodoni, 8-24
Poster Bodoni Ital., 8-18

Regal Bld., 8-14
Regal Light, 8-14
Regal Lt. Ital., 8-12
Vogue Bld., 8-30
Vogue Bld. Ital., 8-30
Vogue Ex. Bld., 8-24
Vogue Ex. Bld. Ital., 8-24
Vogue Light, 8-30

HAND SET

Archer, 36-48
Bodoni Ital., 18-36
Bodoni Bld., 30-42
Bodoni Campanile Cond., 24-72
Bradley, 24-48
Cameo, 24-36
Caslon Ital., 18-72
Caslon Light, 18-72
Century Bld. Ital., 18-48
Cheltenham Bld., 18-72
Cheltenham Bld. Ital., 18-48
Cheltenham Cond., 18-60
Cheltenham Cond. Ital., 18-48
Cond. Gothic, 18-72
Cooper Bld., 14-72
Cooper Bld. Ital., 18-36
Flemish, 36-60
Franklin Gothic Bld., 18-60
Goudy Bld., 18-72
Goudy Bld. Ital., 18-72

Goudy Old Style, 30-48
Goudy Text, 30-72
Greco, 18-72
John Hancock, 18-72
Kabel Light, 36-72
Kabel Light Ital., 24-48
Lucian Bld., 24-36
Lydian, 18-72
Lydian Ital., 18-72
Lydian Bld., 18-72
Lydian Bld. Ital., 18-72
Mid Gothic, 18-160
Stymie Bld., 18-72
Stymie Ex. Bld., 18-72
Title Gothic, 48-84
Ultra Bodoni, 30-72
Ultra Bodoni Ital., 24-36
Vogue, 18-72
Vogue Ex. Bld. Cond., 24-72
Vogue Ex. Bld. Cond. Ital., 24-72

Under these circumstances the designer does the best he can; he is able to control arrangement to a certain extent. When matter is set outside and matrices supplied to the newspaper, the type problem takes on another aspect, of course. But even in that case one cannot always be sure. If margins at the top and bottom, for example, are important parts of the design, some element needs to be set in those positions to make sure of the margins; otherwise the stone-man will likely saw them off. Type faces with small openings in the

"e," etc., that incline to fill up with ink in normal practice are quite sure to fill up in newspapers.

Pictures in newspapers

The newspaper is a fertile soil in which to grow commonplace advertising pictures—or is it merely that one's daily contact with the medium makes it seem so? Newspaper pictures are mostly in line, and line is a perfect vehicle for graphic ideas; but distinguished line drawings are as rare in newspapers as . . . Mr. Pennell averred they were! It is not within the province of the layout man to say how pictures should be made for newspapers. His job is arranging them after they are made. He would have his own views to volunteer if occasion arose. He would say that there is one kind of picture that occurs in overwhelming quantity—the female fashion picture. He would have his artist avoid that manner, simply because there are so many of them. He would suggest a chance for something new in fashion pictures; he would train up a talented member of the retail-store staff to make pen sketches *au naturel* (i.e., not in the exaggerated convention), from living models, with details and notes written on the side—like a page from an artist's sketch-book. They would be interesting, no matter how naïve they might be; and the ladies would soon get used to them.

Fashion cuts

Monotony

He would suggest further that when the trade ran away with a given kind of picture—when he saw unmistakably the same young lady engaged in every possible kind of operation, from washing her hands to giving her tea guests an uncomfortable quarter of an hour over the unapproachable magnificence of a new rug, he would have his artist avoid that young lady.

Decoration

If a newspaper advertisement is put together properly it does not need a border. Your border, according to

the convention, is a device for holding off the mob—four walls built around the space to make a region of quiet wherein you can transact business—a dike to dam back the flood. But I submit that an advertisement, suitably organized, gets a better grip on attention if it works right out in the open.

The retail trade which uses space every day leans hard on the trade-mark border—a set design employed continuously to give the firm's advertising individuality. It is livelier practice to have the trade-mark quality result from a style of type or style of set-up—that is to say, to build the individual style part of the affair out of living units.

Trade-mark borders

Living units. There is the nub of the question of decorative material in newspaper advertising: decoration is (mostly) dead matter. Ornament (so called) adds just one more touch of confusion to a situation already confused. It clutters up space. The average person calls ornament "gingerbread work," "curlicues," "rococo." All these are terms of reproach. The wise designer with his ear to the stethoscope (listening to the heart-beat of the great public) will take the hint. If he can command "modernist" ornamental devices he will make a considerable stir and be conspicuous—but he will disturb many good conservative folk!

Gingerbread work

Periodicals

A METHOD of attack appears to have developed itself in the last section. Therein we discussed the specific advertising product in connection with two desired qualities—visibility and legibility. Then we glanced at the apparatus of advertising as it applied to the particular product. This method may now be used upon the second grand division of "space," namely, periodical advertising.

"Periodical" is a convenient blanket term for de-

Definition

Problem of competition

fining a heterogeneous group of publications. It may be assumed to include weeklies, monthlies, quarterlies popular and technical, of all qualities and formats.

In the periodical department of space advertising the struggle to be conspicuous is not so acute as it is in the newspapers. Full-page space particularly, in this department, can devote a considerable part of its architectural skill to being *pleasant*. Competition goes on, to be sure; the area opposite (unless you have the outside back cover, or a "two-page spread") will always put up a fight to be seen, but on equal terms—and equal terms is another story.

The "conspicuous" part of the job resolves itself into the problem of stopping a more or less leisurely reader as he turns the pages, stopping him long enough to etch a phrase or an image into his consciousness. As the size of the space grows smaller the "planocompetitive" problem emerges again, somewhat on the newspaper terms. But, speaking broadly, we are now in a calmer region.

Three formats

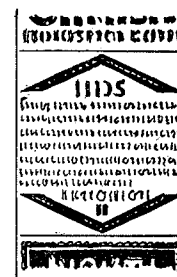
Publications of the periodical class occur in a variety of page sizes; they may be arranged roughly in three categories: 11 by 14, a size that may be listed for our purposes as "weekly," although various monthly publications occur in it; 6½ by 9½, the dimensions of the traditional monthly magazine; and 9 by 12, an intermediate size used by various special "class" publications, which we may call the "review" size. The features of the problem of "primary contact and reaction" are the same for all three. The differences are differences in scale—except at one point, namely, that in the weekly the larger size allows more small advertisements to be assembled on one page than in the monthly, and consequently the competition for attention among small-sized advertisements in a weekly is more keen. But in publications of all three classes the

smaller advertisements are likely to be placed next to reading matter; so in your struggle for attention you have to overwhelm only the competitors above you and below you in the column. Any red-blooded advertiser dismisses the "reading matter" nonchalantly as of no import.

For one-eighth page and smaller in the monthlies, and for single column in the weeklies, a centered symmetrical arrangement is probably the most conspicuous. There is not room enough to play tricks by setting features off on the side, or juggling them otherwise to catch the eye. And there is chance enough even in a symmetrical scheme to make things interesting by introducing an ornament or a picture or a vigorous word in type. But one needs to keep a wary eye on the *vertical* competition. Emphatic spots must be built into the scheme compactly and not let stray out on the upper and lower margins. A glance at a weekly page with advertisements flanked on one side or the other by reading matter will demonstrate the cogency of the admonition; the notices in the column resolve themselves into a melange, out of which it is wellnigh impossible to pick an individual.

As the size of the space increases, the contest for attention changes from an elbow-to-elbow ballyhoo to a simple effort to stop the reader as he turns the page. The struggle along the boundaries has ceased. The arrangement takes on more importance *as a design*. You can begin to think of it as if it stood alone in the world, and to treat it on its merits.

Full-page space in periodicals takes on the quality of a placard pasted on a blank wall, competing for attention only with the placard opposite. The effort now is to stop the passer-by and hold him while you pour your insinuating message into his ear. The "arrest" is a different kind of an arrest from that

Vertical competition*Defense above and below**As the size increases**Full page*

required when you are clamoring for attention as one of a group. You have the advantage of singularity. You and the wayfarer are there alone. Your adroitness in buttonholing him will be inspired by the tête-à-tête situation. In what does that adroitness consist?

The three elements The literary expert says that there are only twenty-two possible plots for stories (or seventeen, or some other strikingly small number), and that all the tales in the libraries are variations on those twenty-two basic themes. A like condition holds in typographic design. There are only a few underlying skeletal structures. The wealth of variety blossoming in our advertisements is grafted upon those few stems. Ordinarily, the elements of a periodical advertisement are the same three parts that we found in newspapers: something to stop the passing public; a flow of persuasive argument; a signature. The methods for blending those parts into a stimulating and legible entity are the methods discussed in the section on newspaper advertising. The methods are the same, but the conditions have changed somewhat.

Weeklies A newspaper is a billboard. I am thinking of the kind of billboard you see in old engravings, a hoarding pasted over with every kind and size of printed paper under the sun—rags of January's vital message fluttering in the wind, overlaid by the fresh *avis* of May. By the same figure a great popular weekly is Nijni-Novgorod held every seven days—a national fair and exposition of products to which the whole world comes. Or take it another way. The newspaper is a street fair with tail-gate barkers and gasoline flares; whereas your magazine advertising section is an industrial exposition adequately housed in dignified pavilions. You hire a booth and dress it up to the best of your ability. Your purpose is to tempt the crowd to pause in front of your

display for long enough to get their minds infected with a craving for your glorified wares.

The emphasis here is on the decorative trimming of the booth—pictures and “artwork.” The layout man's struggle now is to get the wealth of *decor* distributed in some kind of logical order, so that the message will not be simply smothered in flowers. Portions—identifiable portions, at least—of the product need to stick out here and there, so that the observer will know why the money was spent.

Given full page, there is the page opposite to be considered even when it is reading matter—and the page that backs up yours! The mammoth weeklies are forced by mere bulk to run on paper that is otherwise than opaque. White space under those conditions turns to a dirty gray if the neighbor on the other side of the wall happens to be vociferous. Deprived of white areas to set off your design, what are you to do? Nothing left but to cover the whole space with pictures and pattern and letterpress.

In a weekly format the size of the page (and the fashion) suggests a design in large scale. In pursuit of terrific impact, certain of our publications incite us to erect Gargantuan facades of lettering that hang over the reader like a doom, threatening to fall and crush out his understanding. But I think a sense of the *right scale* may be invoked. Advertisements in periodicals are to be viewed from a distance of eighteen inches.

Turn the thin pages of a bulky periodical of the weekly format, holding it in the normal way, and see what results. There is a dead area next to the binding edge that tends not to open fully, about one-third of the page in width—a hint to get the vital part of the arrangement in the middle of the page. (You cannot say on which side the binding edge will come.)

Show-through

Scale in weeklies

Critical area

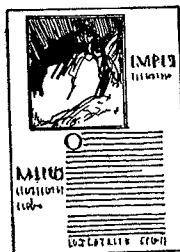
Pictures in weeklies



*line of picture
continued*



*line of picture
opposed*



*Picture & letterpress
50/50*

In your examination you light upon another outstanding fact—that the advertiser relies mainly on pictures to draw attention to his display. Pictures come to the layout man ready-made. It is his job to say (to a limited extent) what their size shall be and where they shall be placed. The design of the usual full-page or half-page weekly advertisement is a problem of arranging a picture or pictures and a secondary area of type matter so that the result will be conspicuous, pleasant, and intelligible.

If the main burden of the task of impressing the public is laid upon pictures, then the typographic design may well start with the picture. The characteristics of the specific picture itself are the first clue to a possible arrangement. There will be conspicuous linear trends in the field of the picture or in the outline of its boundary that will provide hints how the type matter outside may be placed to augment the effect of the "map" arrangement as a whole. Lines within the picture can be continued outside, or they can be opposed by typographic lines or areas that will make the complete pattern vigorous by means of contrast. In other words, when picture is the chief argument, the map of the picture is the key to the map of the general design. The typographic elements will be used to support and emphasize the picture *considered as a pattern*.

When picture and type play equal parts in the argument, the designer's job is to combine their separate demands for attention into a single unified impression. If the picture is rectangular, the simple and natural way to do this is to make the areas equal and similar and to place them according to one of the schemes of symmetrical balance. If the picture is a vignette or otherwise without rectangular boundaries, one contrives an effect of balance, using the irregular blank gaps as

integral parts of the pattern. With type the main theme and picture as accessory, the logical shaping up of the type-set argument in a form to be easily apprehended sets the key of the typographical map, and the pictures are placed to support and supplement the pattern of the type, or its logic.

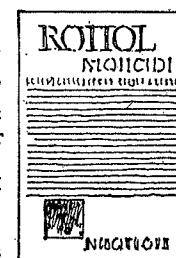
Pictures are most vivid and appealing when they are used in a state of nature—when they stand alone simply as pictures and are not dressed up with pseudo-decorative borders and ornamental gimcracks. Diagrammatic and allegorical pictures appear to advantage in ornamental framework because they are themselves decorative in character, but naturalistic representations (such as most advertising pictures are) never seem comfortable in decorative borders. Squared-up pictures help the unity of a periodical advertisement because they are in harmony with the rectangular character of the page. Irregularly bounded pictures furnish excellent material for arranging interesting "maps."

The over-zealous designer in pursuit of novel effects plays weird tricks with the bounding line of a picture—cuts notches, describes arcs, projects dentations. He is trying to make the picture attractive. The truth of the matter is that if the picture is not attractive *per se* it cannot be made attractive by such adventitious aids—and if it is attractive, its native beauty is diminished by the barber-surgeon's ministrations. Simple boundaries, rectangles, circles, ellipses, symmetrical polygons, serve the picture best. The attractive quality that the designer hopes to effect is effected more happily by producing an interesting pattern in the advertisement as a whole.

The monthly format, 6½ by 9½, has its own appropriate scale and its own atmosphere. Whereas the weekly page induces one to sprawl a bit, or to indulge a weak-



*Picture & type
vignette 50/50*



Letterpress first

*Monthly
format*

ness for grandiose effects, the monthly format brings the affair down to a sharper focus. It is more intimate, one may say, or more domestic; its associations are a reading lamp and a fireside; it reflects a little more the domain of books.

The general practice is, of course, to design for the weekly format and then to reduce the design to fit the monthly size. But that is not the best practice, and what we are concerned with here is the appropriate arrangement of material specifically for the monthly page. The type page—5½ by 8—is not large enough for grand gestures. Behemoth needs a wide field to flounder in; put him in a drawing-room and incongruity results. But the monthly format is not a handicap to generously conceived design because its page is small. A properly adjusted scale takes care of that. It is possible for a design to be the size of a postage stamp and at the same time have the wide horizons of a mural decoration.

The most interesting place on a magazine page is a point about one-third of the way down the page. A full-page advertisement that has an axis of interest, or a focus of interest, at that point seems to be an easy-access advertisement. The classic arrangement, justified at all points, is a symmetrically centered scheme made up of a picture at the top a little less than one-third of the space high, and under it either a displayed line, then text matter one-third of the space high, and a signature; or else a one-third picture, an area of text of deeper dimension and a large displayed signature. If all full-page advertisements were set in just that way, the quality of contrast would have to go by the board, and the result would not be stimulating. So methods for departing from the classic scheme have to be devised. Be it remarked, however, that the virtues of the said scheme are by no means exhausted, and its rarity



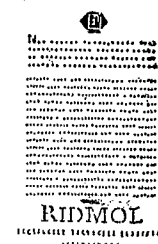
commends it still, as may be determined by a perusal of the advertising pages of any magazine.

Methods for departure are sought in the form of irregularly balanced pages. However irregularly the matter is disposed, it will usually be wise to contain the most important features within an area that comes more or less in the center of the page. Discursive bits may run out to this side and that, but it is obvious that a strong attractive element down the side of the design loses its force if it happens to come on the binding edge. The extreme top margin appears to be an unsuitable locus for a strong feature such as an important line of text. It is somehow displaced beyond the range of interest. If an attractive element is placed at the extreme top it needs to be small in area and vigorous in color, such a matter as an energetic trade-mark or a black little picture or ornament. A small and vigorous element put in that place directs attention to the matter below it.

Extremely large letters on a magazine page are out of scale (except a single short word in unexpectedly large size, centered), and there is not room enough for the sweeping graphic gestures that would be suitable in a weekly. Scale is the word to cling to—getting the parts into dimensions neither so large as to appear gross, nor so small as to seem niggling.

It remains to examine the review size of periodical—9 by 12—with an eye to discovering what points about that format set the pitch for advertising design. One striking feature about periodicals in the review size is that they carry an unusually large number of small-sized advertisements. Another notable thing is that they are mostly directed toward special publics. Criticism, literary and political; technical discussion; religion; science; horticulture; chicken farming—a

*Irregular
balance*



*Scale in
monthlies*

Reviews

thousand and one special publications occur in this size.

Small advertisements So far as full-page space goes, the design is generally a weekly scheme shrunk to fit the smaller page, or else a plain and uninspired product of the periodical's own composing-room. The fractional-page advertisements are the chief problem in the review format. These smaller areas compete with the acerbity of newspaper space, and their typography suffers the same handicap that affects small-size news advertisements; they are usually set by the "home plant" in whatever type and style that the composing-room elects. When it is possible for them to be laid out and "set sympathetic," the designer directs his effort toward getting as much contrast as possible with the field that will surround his production. His point of departure will be the advertisements that customarily appear in the given publication; he will try to depart from that periodical's "norm."

Why so serious? There is a deadly seriousness about the small advertisements in a "review." They go at their job with the clenched teeth and the staring eye that mark down financial advertising as the most serious and the least thrilling activity in the world. The designer seizes upon this tragic and bleak background as a foil for a few contrasting gayeties. He cultivates ease and grace so far as he is able. The usual small-space advertisement is sure that it can make itself felt if it can only get black enough type. It is mistaken. There will be other ink on the page.

Paper in periodicals The calendered or coated paper on which practically all periodicals are printed allows the widest choice of engraving processes. The relation of type to this kind of paper has not yet (as I have averred before) been worked out. The old-style types such as Caslon, made

to be used on antique-finish paper, are thin and pale on coated paper. Faces with stronger color and more contrast between their thick and thin strokes, such as Scotch or Bodoni, seem to relate better to S. & SC. The intention of the particular scheme will determine the kind of type—but see the comment on type in the Booklet section.

Ornament fits into the scheme in periodical advertisements—if it is sound ornament and vivacious. Taken as a whole, the mode in this branch of advertising is bad, because it does not ornament. The designer treads carefully here and makes positively sure of the virtue of the material.

Ornament in full-page periodical advertising should be used for esthetic reasons solely. There is no need to fend off neighboring attractions. The whole attention can be devoted to cultivating the field itself. A border now is not a fence, but a frame—a means for enhancing the beauty of the page. The question of border or no border can be settled at once: Does the decorative design under consideration add to the good looks of the page? If there is a tremor of doubt on that point, delete the decoration. If a border is dragged in as an afterthought to "hold the page together," there is something wrong with the page.

Ornament in periodicals

DIRECT ADVERTISING

WE HAVE passed through the planocompetitive zone. The din of the territory of "space" hums in the distance behind us like the drone of a city heard from a height beyond the walls. In this region of comparative calm we stop and take stock of our equipment, for a new and different encounter. Some of the strategy we have learned will serve us, some of it will be laid aside as

A new condition

useless for "direct" warfare. We confront new conditions and will have to practice a new tactic.

*And a new
problem*

The old problem of capturing the recipient's attention is the same, but the circumstances are different. The conditions surrounding that critical moment of first contact have altered. In space advertising there is no positive assurance that your notice will fall under the devoted victim's eye. There is reasonable assurance that the "direct" piece will *at least* be seen. It can more or less be taken for granted that every piece of advertising that arrives by mail will be examined. So the pointer shifts a little away from the problem of "making him see it" and moves over toward "making him *read* it" when seen. Our shock tactics, then, are to be concentrated on the second and third items of that triad of advertising compulsions: "See," "read," and "remember." Under these new conditions the layout man's function would seem to be to make the affair so seductive that no normally constituted person could resist it.

*"Read," and
"Remember"*

All advertising labors under disadvantage unless it carries information that the reader craves beforehand. One does not run away with the idea, therefore, that "direct mail" has no troubles of its own—that it has an advantage over "space" because it can waive point No. 1 and concentrate upon points 2 and 3. Anyone's experience at the receiving end of direct mail tells him that the "directness" of the method is often a misnomer. When a piece comes in by mail, one opens the envelope and unfolds the document and glances at it . . . and then? . . .

*Layout
and direct
advertising*

Is it possible for layout to *compel* a reading of the document? It is not. All that layout can do is to make the way easy, to give the mailing piece a chance for its life. Unless its message is pertinent to the needs, or to the susceptibilities, of the receiver, no manipulation of

pictures and type will give it vitality, no outpouring of artistic skill upon its cover will prolong its effective life. It will not be "saved" on account of its good looks. This is as true for "domestic consumption" as it is for "office reciprocity." Some business firms do undoubtedly sort and file for reference advertising matter as it comes in, but the filing is done on a basis of *subject*, not on a basis of typographic design.

The recipient's first encounter with an advertisement arriving by mail is a critical episode (for the advertiser), notwithstanding the fact that the recipient is almost sure to give the piece due meed of attention. *If* it falls in with his current needs, or if it provides information on a point that engages his interest, it will have an amiable reception—yet the tone in which it speaks will be important. It can skip into the reader's ken as gayly as the parlor-maid in the play, or it can blunder in like a yokel; it can arrive like good news or it can enter with the footsteps of a messenger of doom. It is within the power of layout to determine the tone of this first contact.

*The critical
first contact*

Of all the aspects that an advertisement may be imagined to assume when it falls under the intended victim's eye there is one that can be chosen as always suitable—a straightforward, assured, and authoritative air. Any of the others you may have if you want them, but this air of level-eyed assurance fits such a variety of cases that we can afford to let the others go, for the time being, and concentrate on this. One is justified in laying particular stress on this point about an air of assurance. Conspicuousness is the vital quality for advertisements that operate through the medium of space. The vital quality for direct advertising is this tone of conviction at the first contact. If the designer can construct a mailing piece that convinces you the instant you see it that it knows what it is talking

*An air of
assurance*

about, his chief work is done. He can then go on and make the affair as pretty as he pleases. The prettiness may help; but it must be kept in a place secondary to the main event.

The didactic tone of the foregoing is induced (and justified) by a state of affairs in graphic advertising design that threatens to harden into a standard practice—an illusory state of affairs deriving from false premises. The conditions that bring it about are like this:

*Why some
advertising
is indirect*

The fabricators of advertising (I mean the organized groups of advertising specialists known as “agencies”) have to sell their own fabrications. They operate under the same handicaps that confront sellers of other kinds of merchandise. Their immediate market is *not* the general public (which they are assumed to address) but that front line of merchandising proprietors who buy their skill. These same proprietors have to be sold *first*. They stand as a kind of hurdle that has to be leaped before the advertising engineer can bring his forces to bear on his real job. All advertising has to be made so that it will run this gauntlet. The proprietors pay the money and therefore they have to be allowed to call the tune.

Sometimes this interposition of screen or sieve between the specialist and his proper public works to the advantage of the advertising. Specialists are not infallible, and merchandising proprietors know the intricacies of their own lines better than anyone else. But, taken at large, this necessity to sell the proprietors first and the public afterward twists advertising into strange shapes. It clutters up valuable room with extraneous bric-a-brac; compels the injection of sweetness where sweetness is a handicap; nicks the edge of the weapon of publicity all along the blade! Very likely the first job that a designer will have to do with a piece of direct-mail advertising will be to make it direct—to

scrape off an entire *flora* of impeding parasitic growths and strip the matter down to essentials.

Waiving the question of this distortion of the scheme (*via* the client) into an innocuous saccharinity, what are the means for getting type, paper, and pictures together into a convincing whole? In the first place, I think that one will dispense with millinery in the form of paper. By millinery I mean “trick” folds and “trick” cut-outs and all the toys that appeal to the child-minded proprietor so powerfully (and so disastrously) when they are presented as sketches and dummies and “new ideas.” The cold little decision to buy that occurs under the reading-lamp when the alluring pages open is not hastened by any “new idea” for folding up the sheet or having it pop open like a jack-in-the-box. The underlying mechanism—the paper substructure—of a mailing-piece is not a good place to be clever and amusing, unless one is addressing a very young public indeed! There is too much risk of inventing a scheme so novel that it tangles the reader up in a labyrinth of folds, or confronts him with argument No. 7 before he has perused the prologue. One will smother any tendency to be cute with these details, and concern oneself with practical considerations only. The wise designer confines himself to inventing a folding scheme that will print readily, that will go through the mail unrumpled, and that will assure a logical development of the argument.

*“Trick”
methods*

Too clever

So much for the paper theme. The themes of type and pictures can be treated more easily in sections devoted to the various forms that direct advertising takes.

The problem of “primary contact and reaction” begins with the wrapper in which a mailing-piece arrives. What part of the advertising job shall be

The wrapper

allotted to that feature? The mechanical work that a wrapper has to do is to get the piece through the mails in a fair condition. One may take that function as work enough, in a given instance—one may stop with the task of delivering the document in the best possible shape. In which case the only (intentional) spots on the wrapper will be a return mark and a stamp or mailing license. There is much to be said for this austere treatment. The envelope will be opened—rest assured—no need for bait there. A plain envelope is more or less a stimulator of curiosity in itself. A plain envelope adds all the more “kick” to the package inside when you come to that, provided the printing on the wrapper is demure. Nothing more swagger than a plain envelope of heavy manila (now that manila has become unusual) if the bit of printing is well managed.

On this basis of distinguished austerity it is not necessary for the paper of the envelope to “match” the paper of the inclosure. The yearning for a “match,” in fact, is a trifle outside the realm of aristocratic distinction. It is a bit bourgeois. It augurs too much attention paid to superficialities. The aristocratic way is to use the rough engine for its own rough purpose, and not try to pretty it up with ribbons and gilding and things.

*Printing on
the envelope*

That is the aristocratic way—but the piece may not be aimed at the higher brackets; it may be planned for humbler service. It may be necessary to get some advertising work done by the envelope itself. At least one duty beyond its mechanical function as a wrapper will be demanded of it; it will be asked to carry a cryptic phrase that (in theory) will arouse the recipient's curiosity and force him to open it.

*Decorating
the wrapper*

The question of decorating the wrapper of a mailing package is debatable. The result usually turns out a trifle cheap. If a wrapper needs to be gaudy, for one reason or another, one will do well to make it thoroughly

and cheerfully gaudy. One part of a mailing package is never decorated—the cardboard stiffener—why might it not be? When the case warranted, one can imagine a pleasant surprise produced by breaking through the plain outside wrapper of a package to gayly patterned boards within that inclosed the ultimate treasure.

A piece may be folded up and stuck together with a seal and sent without any wrapper at all. Unless the import of the communication is along severely practical lines, this evidence of extreme economy may take some of the bloom off the reception—a make-weight may need to be added to the piece in the form of embellishment elsewhere. On the other hand, when a mailing-piece is designed in a *chic* and sophisticated way, the wrapperless method of mailing adds a touch of interest of its own, through its very simplicity. The wrapperless method has three decided advantages; it is a frank admission of the status of the document *as an advertisement*; it saves money; it is easily opened. The first of these advantages calls attention to one point about mailing-piece packages. I think that the general public has reached a stage of sophistication such that it no longer pays to deceive it. Advertisements can now quite safely function as advertisements. There is no longer any need to disguise them as letters by first-class post.

*Mailed
without
wrapper*

Broadsides and Folders

BROADSIDES and folders pursue a common aim. A broadside is big, a folder any size. The essential point in either seems to be that it is a single sheet of paper printed on one side or on both and folded up. It is assumed that a broadside will be unfolded and (one side at least) read full size, whereas the reading of a folder will usually go forward fold by fold. There is a

faint and lingering assumption that a broadside will be hung up on a wall and serve as a poster or placard. A folder is a hand implement. The question for the designer is, What was the reason for casting the particular advertisement into the form of a broadside or folder, and how can that reason be given freest play?

*The reason for
a broadside*

The reason behind a broadside is the desire to make an impression by means of grand scale. One side of it will use the full area of the sheet. It will then be folded down to a convenient size for mailing. The smaller areas made on the back of the sheet by the folds will be used as progressive approaches to the final grand impression. One of the smaller areas will serve as a mailing face where the address, etc., will appear if the piece is dispatched without a wrapper. A broadside scheme contemplates a final climax—a simultaneous explosion of all ordnance, led up to by discharges of lesser pieces in succession. It is a stage setting that opens, part by part, until the full scene is disclosed. The obvious thing for the designer to do is to make sure of the grand climax first, and then work back step by step to the mailing face or the title area.

Step by step

The final full-sheet disclosure calls for design in large scale: large pictures, large type—poster treatment. The step-by-step approach will be scaled down proportionately. Theoretically the reader is forced by the scheme of folding to read each step in the argument in its proper order. His mind is fortified little by little, and he is able to stand up under the shock when the full truth breaks on him.

Folder per se

Ordinarily a folder in its folded-up state will be small, to go into a $6\frac{3}{4}$ envelope perhaps, and each folded face will be treated as a separate page; or there will be a two-fold area in the middle flanked by single-fold spaces. There is no particular progression of interest, or suspense. A folder tells its story in separate bits.

For practical purposes a folder is a way to achieve something in the nature of a booklet without the trouble of binding. A small folder is, in essence, a brief pamphlet with its pages neither cut apart nor stitched—with this difference, that a pamphlet displays its message two pages at a time, while a folder can exhibit a number of things side by side, simultaneously. A pamphlet is the natural vehicle for a running story; a folder, for a group of related unit items.

The full-page side of a broadside ignores the lines made by folding—the design runs right across them; it is a poster folded into a convenient size to be mailed. A broadside is big, essentially. Bigness is the only reason for using that form of presentation. The full sheet is the unit of the size you have in mind in planning it.

The design of a folder admits the fact of the folds. The creases are considered as boundaries of fields of design. Folders may be any size, from the size of a postage stamp to folio of the largest sheet made. The unit of size in designing a folder is the folded area—*scale* is set by the sheet folded up.

Booklets

ONE visualizes a booklet in this fashion: It comes to you in an envelope. You know what it is by the shape. A thousand booklets have preceded it. The advent of another does not give you any particular thrill. The genus *booklet* has been scored so deeply into your consciousness that you are able to see it in detail through the paper that wraps it. You know just what the cover is like, and the cheery way the text will begin inside, and the identical brand of foliage around the title-page. The envelope bears a printed phrase that gives you no hint of the subject the booklet will chat about; a phrase intended to inflame your curiosity to fever pitch.

*Just another
booklet*

Nevertheless, you are ennuied. You doubt whether the texture of your life will be changed by reading it. No matter what the message may be. . . . But you open the flap and extract the document. For a flash the cover promises a fresh outlook . . . but the first page inside drops back to a government-pamphlet level; just as you feared. . . .

The ethics of advertising permit one to do anything except bore a person to death. This is an aphorism, and it applies to no other class of advertising so pertinently as it does to booklets. A booklet is an agent for telling a particular kind of story, a story too long and complicated to be told conveniently in any other way. It engages to hold the reader's attention for a longer time than is given to the perusal of an advertisement in a magazine, for instance. Boredom, in such a contingency, is fatal.

The critical point is *the text*. There's where the damage will be done if it is done. If you can get the story to look interesting when the reader turns back the cover, you have warded off disaster—for the moment, at least.

Booklets reach their billets in two ways. (Every booklet has its billet.) They arrive by mail, or else they are picked up from retailers' counters or otherwise emanate from retail stores in packages or by hand.

Cover designs

If a booklet comes by mail, its cover does not need to be an eye-trap. The arrival by mail does the trick that a striking cover is ordained to do in the second instance mentioned above. The cover of a mailed booklet can very well ignore the "intriguing" part of the job, and concentrate on being gay—on saying "how-d'ye-do" pleasantly.

In the second instance mentioned—retail-store as center of distribution—it is obvious that if a booklet hopes to be picked up it needs to call attention to itself;

and the obvious way for it to call attention to itself is by means of its cover.

If a clerk hands a booklet out as part of the description of a ware, the booklet may reasonably fall into the mail-booklet class—its cover will be neat and pleasant, but not necessarily startling. But when the cover is expected to operate as bait it ought certainly to be unusual. A "bait" cover that can be sorted at once into any particular class of design (as "brown linen-texture paper, blind-embossed rule border, embossed gold lettering") is a failure.

The booklet jinx is boredom—all typographic rules are off in the fight against that demon. The obvious and traditional way to place a title line on the cover is a way to be shunned. "Bookish" look is anathema. Anything that suggests sustained and laborious reading is anathema. Decoration, in any of the traditional styles, sinks the ship. The correct way to go about designing a booklet is to assemble an exhibition of booklets on a table side by side, and then mark down and reject from your plan all their characteristic features.

We began with booklet covers, but the process of design doesn't do that. The design starts with the inside and works out. The style of the body matter is more important than the style of the trimmings. Its details are type face, indentation, leading, margins. These features ought not to follow the fashion of books, they ought to strike out a style of their own. Any departure from traditional practice that still is *legible* is welcome. Any unusual type face that is *legible* is an asset. Legibility is the only ballast to be carried. Headings, title-page details, should not remind one of headings and title-pages of books.

All this pursuit of typographic novelty—essential to the success of an advertising booklet—entails a serious risk. The callow adventurer after novelty is apt to

Bait

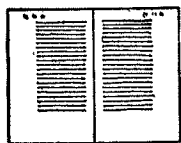
*Boredom
fatal*

Type page

Warning

bring up shortly in a bog, a bog of execrably bad taste. The thing we demand is not the fantastic, merely. It is inspired fantasia. To ride this course requires more than a flair for mad riding—it calls, indeed, for a thoroughgoing knowledge of equitation. Before one can *play* with type one needs to know what has been done with type sedately through the centuries of printing.

Exaggerate



With that caution in mind one can go on and say that the secret of lively typography in booklet advertising is exaggeration. Leads a little wider than is compatible with the average compositor's ethics; paragraphs indented three ems instead of one; margins a little broader than the mode; or, contrariwise, the page packed full of type with hardly any margins at all. Whatever is done needs to be done emphatically—with conviction. If the type face is inclined to obesity, let it be definitely fat, not merely plump. If the page is visualized as thin, stretch a point and make it unmistakably skinny. The prime object in all this is to make a page that will be unusual enough to be inviting—not so unusual as to be shocking. If you carry your exaggeration a trifle too far you tumble into absurdity—it calls for a nice balance!

Pictures

The easiest way to get spice into a booklet story is to illustrate it with pictures or diagrams. But pictures need to be pertinent. Casual "thumb-nail sketches" tossed in on the margins with the idea of prettying up the page are excess baggage—they slow down the speed. If the pictures do actual work in making the meaning of the text plain, they are the best possible aid toward rendering dry text matter juicy and inviting.

Diagrams

Diagrams of all sorts are assets, even the baldest kinds of graphs. Anything that is like type, and yet is not type, and that *seems to mean something*, makes a booklet page lively—little diagrams, for example, that explain mechanisms. Such things introduced as spice

need really to contribute something to the story. If they are purely decorative, they act as deterrents—they distract attention, or else are seen at once to be merely ornamental and are discarded by the reader—with an effort. He is obliged to examine them for a possible hidden significance, and then to jump over them. Over-ornate running heads and page numbers are distracting elements. In general, pages that are intended to be *read* need to be wary about dressing themselves up with decoration.

Ornament

When the theme of a booklet is carried by pictures rather than by text—when the piece is intended to operate as a picture-book—the same reasoning applies. Anything that distracts attention from the pictures is a liability. It is possible to neutralize completely the effectiveness of a fine set of pictures by surrounding them with elaborate ornamental frames. Usually there is no reason for having decorative borders around pictures in a booklet; such things are introduced on the mistaken assumption that they add beauty. The paper page of the booklet, serving as a mat, is all the mounting that a picture needs if the picture is placed properly. This advocacy of simple treatment of pictures and text may seem to militate against the exaggeration theme presented above. It is not so. The simplicity itself may well be exaggerated. At all events ornamental trimming is a bad thing to exaggerate.

Borders on pictures

The trick of exaggerating presupposes a knowledge of the normal good style whose features one exaggerates. That normal good style in book-page printing has been exploited at great length in all the treatises on printing and in the technical journals. It is doubtful if it needs to be gone into here. We content ourselves with a glance.

The unit of design for books is two pages facing—what one sees when a book lies open. Therefore the

Normal book page

margin of blank paper is considered as framing the two printed pages taken together, not one page at a time. The result of this way of looking at it is that the margins on a single page vary in width, usually narrowest at the binding edge, and growing wider at the top, at the front edge, and at the bottom, in that order. Usually one's thumb holds a book by the bottom margin, so that edge is a kind of handle, and consequently widest of all. The normal good style of type management for books follows the points set down in the section on Legibility, under Newspapers.

Paper

As in all other cases, the paper suitable for a booklet will depend upon what the booklet is to exhibit. If the presentation is type matter exclusively, or type with line cuts, the suitable paper will be one that affords type the best chance, namely, antique finish or English finish. If tonal pictures are to be used, the kind of plates required will determine the paper. The paper can afford to be slightly exaggerated, too, so long as it is not so strange that it renders the text illegible. The selection of a satisfactory type style calls for personal ingenuity—the selection of a suitable paper is an exercise of taste. The papers exist and can be chosen from samples; whereas type styles have to be invented.

Type

Type faces for booklets—as for all other kinds of advertising—are to be selected upon a basis of their intrinsic quality: whether they are legible; whether they are pleasant to the eye. Printers who advertise indulge in a great deal of talk about the *expressiveness* of this type and that, about making the typography fit the crime. Their booklets demonstrate how type can be selected to “express” exclusiveness, discretion, virility, pride, and the other human weaknesses and virtues. The argument is that if you are offering fragile laces to delicate females, you will use the dainty type No. X, assembled in a sun-lit room by workwomen in

white gloves—but if it is ax-helves you are talking about to red-blooded lumberjacks, your compositor (male) will spit on his hands and jam the virile type No. Z into a reinforced composing-stick. One is inclined to doubt the truth of these arguments. At first blush it is natural to assume that delicate, thin type will give a peculiarly convincing setting to a discourse on a delicate subject, or that thick, rugged types are the suitable fonts to use for addressing husky people. But at second blush (if the idiom may be stretched so far), one concludes that it isn't so much the types that give expression to a mood as it is the way they are put together. One would be perfectly safe in engaging to make a meticulously dainty booklet about chiffon veiling and set the text in “real-estate Gothic.” The type face needs to be legible and pleasant, and needs to suit the kind of paper used—and beyond that it doesn't much matter *what* type face. . . . In the pursuit of novelty it is probably wiser to depend for that quality upon the way a normal type is handled rather than upon an eccentric type. It is dangerous to play pranks with the actual reading process itself—with legibility; eccentric types play tricks with legibility.

Does “type express”?

Illustrated Letters

THE illustrated letter, in its original and unsophisticated form, was a four-page letter sheet with the firm's regular letter-head on its first page, and advertising printed on the other pages, used for regular or special correspondence in the usual way. The letter on page 1 was a *bona fide* typewritten letter. From this start the form has developed into a special style of advertising folder. The letter part is printed in typewriter type and is written in the form of a letter, but otherwise is on the same advertising basis as other parts of the docu-

ment. In other words, an illustrated letter is an advertising folder with one of its faces arranged as a letter.

*A folder
in disguise*

This particular form of folder eludes the grasp of the designer in his effort to find out just what is the underlying purpose to be served. The assumption is that the letter on page 1 gives the document a personal tone and paves the way for a later study of the advertising material on a more intimate basis. The letter on page 1 is a form letter printed by multigraph, or in typewriter type. This fact puts the letter part of the folder beyond the range of the layout man's activity. He proceeds on the theory that page 1 is blank, and designs the rest of the folder after the fashion of folders in general.

Envelope Stuffers

AN envelope stuffer is a "rider" superimposed upon regular business correspondence. It arrives in company with a letter (or a bill) and consequently operates under a handicap. The letter or bill is "live matter" and commands first attention. If the stuffer gets any notice at all, the stuffer has to earn it.

*Attention
for Stuffers*

There are two ways for bringing a stuffer to the reader's notice. One way is to make it look like a typewritten slip—printed by multigraph or in typewriter type on a paper like the paper of the letter. So designed it will appear to be a part of the "live matter" and will be read. This scheme involves deceit, and the recipient may not be pleased. The other way is to print it on bright-colored paper. If the color is bright enough, and if the typographic design is novel enough, a stuffer will have a chance to do its bit as advertising. As a usual thing stuffers are not designed; they are "set up."

Disabilities

As they are usually employed stuffers are fringe advertising. They creep in under the margin of the one-half ounce not used up by the letter. In other words, they are openly and obviously penny-pinchers. As a

stuffer is usually made, its inclusion in a piece of regular correspondence is not a compliment to the receiver. It is the designer's job to turn this slightly distasteful bit of paper into a compliment. Instead of relegating a stuffer to the bottom of the heap as the lowliest form of advertising, the designer has rather to take it seriously and expend considerable thought upon it. It imposes a problem in design like that of blotters and calendars—it involves a question of courtesy. Such elaborate and punctilious genuflections in the presence of a mere stuffer may seem ridiculous, but I see no way for the layout man to perform otherwise if he is to use brains in his processes. And I develop the point because it is a good example of how the designer *begins* to design. There is always something besides type and paper involved.

*Question
of courtesy*

It is easy to say what a stuffer ought not to be. It ought not to be a *mere* stuffer—a casual handful of type printed on any chance leaving of "trim." So conceived and so executed it will be worse than dead weight in an envelope; it may even set up a negative reaction in the mind of the recipient. To move it over into the positive column requires ingenuity. When it drops out of the fold of a letter it must exert at least as much "pull" as the unread letter, if it is to do any advertising work at all. That means that it will need to be an unusually interesting bit of typography. It will be a leaf or a folder no larger than the envelope ordinarily used for correspondence. On the basis of differentiating itself at once from the letter part of the package it may well be decidedly smaller than the folded letter-sheet—small enough to be noticeable. Its paper ought to be bright colored and its design unique.

*Negative
advice*

Calendars

BLOTTERS and calendars stand together in a class "Special of advertising that might be called "special duty" *duty*"

advertising. They are more than advertisements. They are intended to please a recipient in a special way. They are dispatched to *serve* him for a certain length of time. When they arrive, unless they qualify immediately as competent to perform the service, their mission is frustrated. Their effectiveness as advertisements depends on how they look when they arrive and on how they look while they "hang around."

A calendar is a month's affair at the shortest; in another form it may be expected to be looked at for a year. A piece of advertising that is called upon to bear up throughout an entire year is obviously a serious undertaking. The proprietor who sends it out regards it for a few moments and judges it on that basis. The designer has to visualize it hanging on a wall, day in and day out, for a period of twelve months.

He begins his design of a calendar with a view to the practical service that it will render—in other words, with the pad. If he starts with the assumption that the table of days is the heart of the device and that other details are to be kept subordinate to the table, he is bound to come through with a design that will be good calendar and good advertising.

The pad The pad is a fixed element; it has to be a certain shape. All the other elements are malleable, and they ought to take their cues from the pad. The design should be a day-table plus accessories. How large shall the table of days be made, what size figures, and how disposed for easy reading? There are several ways to arrange it: D is probably the easiest to read.

The ideal If I were asked what kind of a calendar I should be most flattered to receive, I could describe it as one whose day-table occupied the major area and was displayed as the main theme. I could be sure, in such a case, that as my eye lit upon the name of the sender, day by day,

and perused the words he used to establish himself in my good graces, I could think of him pleasantly. In the scheme of my ideal calendar the advertising feature would take second place. Usually it would be a statement of the firm's name and activity, or these combined with a picture. But if I used a picture I should still keep it subordinate to the pad.

	A				
Sun.	7	14	21	28	
Mon	1	8	15	22	29
Tues	2	9	16	23	30
Wed	3	10	17	24	31
Thur.	4	11	18	25	
Fri.	5	12	19	26	
Sat.	6	13	20	27	

C

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

B

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

D

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

A typical advertising calendar for home consumption is a colored picture—of anything—with a diminutive pad attached. This type hardly comes within the lay-out man's field of enterprise, because it designs itself; there is only one way to do it.

Blotters

THE strictly advertising function of a blotter is performed at the moment when it arrives. After it is put to use as a *blotter*, its service as an advertisement ends. *Obligation incurred by sender*

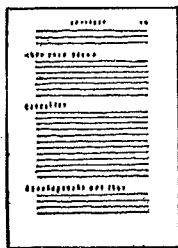
After it starts its career as a desk appointment, no one will pay any attention to the words printed on it.

An advertising blotter's initial job is to convey a message from sender to recipient—but more is asked of it than is demanded of a circular or folder: It is expected to linger in the recipient's service for a while, not to be thrown away at once—and this extension of its useful life lays an obligation on the sender. He is bound to foresee (if he is a gentleman) that the blotter shall not be an eye-sore on his beneficiary's desk!

The ideal An advertising blotter ought to be a rectangle of colorful, stimulating ornament, as engaging to the eye as a bit of Persian tile or a shred of Sicilian brocade. There is no reason why it should not be so. The advertising part of the device ought to be confined to small area, or else wrought into the structure of the design in such a way that it became a part of the decoration. No one ever saw such a blotter; nevertheless, that is the way a blotter ought to be. A blotter of that kind would be a welcome accessory on anyone's desk, until its beauty were effaced by the honorable scars of service.

Catalogs

A readable list A CATALOG is a *list*, first of all—a tabular list of subjects, each subject with descriptive comment. The fundamental problem for the layout man is to evolve a scheme that will bring the subjects forward so that they can be seized by the eye, and to arrange the descriptive comment so that it will not retard the process of reading the subjects as a list. The handiest scheme for a solid-letterpress catalog—the classic scheme, one may say—is an arrangement that puts the subjects in a heavier face than the descriptive matter, and hangs them out twelve points beyond the left margin of the comment. Such a scheme serves a wide range of occasions. It is not beautiful, but it can be made neat.



The first step away from such a scheme will be a centered heading which states the subject, and below it the comment in a paragraph. N. B. that the first word of the paragraph ought not to be indented; indentation at this place rounds the corner of the paragraph and blunts the sharpness of the emphasis which one seeks to give both heading and comment. The centered heading will probably be best in upper-and-lower two sizes larger than the paragraph matter, and in the same face, or in italic of that face. The centered heading is emphatic enough through its size and position—it does not need to be in bold-face. The suavity and legibility of a page suffers from an overdose of bold-face. Pictures will be worked into this scheme by centering them above the centered subject-heading. Picture, heading, and descriptive paragraph will then be a unit arrangement of three elements in symmetrical centered balance; and, of course, each unit will be separated from the next by more space than occurs between picture and heading or heading and paragraph. The good looks of such an arrangement will depend upon the (esthetically) correct allotment of these spaces. No rules to control the correctness of the allotment can be adduced.

Such is catalog design on its basic terms—simple terms that give ample room for both beauty and utility. But simple terms are not enough in modern merchandising. Something beside is demanded. A simple presentation is looked upon—by the average person—as barren and unattractive. The catalog needs to be “dressed up.” The designer's problem in catalog-making resolves itself into something like this: How to make a catalog ornamental and attractive (from the popular viewpoint) without sacrificing its utility and its good looks.

If the appropriation runs to the extent of colored half-tones, the problem of dressing up is solved without much trouble. Colored pictures are always interesting.

*Subject
items
centered*

Pictures

*“Dressing
it up”*

*Colored
pictures*

The trick in such a case is to let the colored pictures alone—not to worry them into queer shapes or fret them with decorative borders. If the subjects permit (say the case of a flower catalog or a list of table china) the backgrounds may be cut away—not vignetted—“cut out” half-tones. The colored areas ending crisply against the white paper make a sparkling page. If the “cut-out” subjects need to be contained within frames, rectangular bands of flat tints can be contrived after the fashion of ruled mats around engravings—with white paper between the framing bands and the pictures. Your vignetted background is a vice. It was once looked upon as elegant. It persists by inertia; it should be helped to die.

*Vignetted
background*

*Tint
background* Pictures in general are best when they are presented simply, in reasonable shapes, without borders. Each step away from a simple rectangular picture not only obscures the picture by that much, but lays unnecessary burdens upon the clarity of the typographic message. Flat tint backgrounds in pale colors running behind pictures and letterpress are in the same category as vignetted backgrounds—they were ordained by a conception of elegance that no longer prevails.

House Publications

To make the score complete one includes house publications under the head of Direct Advertising. But the extreme range of style and format in this group makes any generalization impossible. The layout problem is, in general, related to the problem of making up newspapers and magazines, which is a theme outside the province of a handbook on advertising layout; but the typographic aim is toward novelty—and usually toward a kind of novelty that breaks the bounds of reasonable design and strays into regions that have not yet been charted.

So far as reason may pursue, the details of house-organ layout are details of type legibility and suitability, the management of headings and title lines, and the management of half-tones in combination with letterpress. By the manipulation of these details the designer produces anything from a tone of austere sobriety to a cacophony of delirious jazz. Over such a range no one can undertake to prescribe for a particular style. The specific case determines the performance. Rules for the use of type already indicated apply to the house-organ problem, so far as legibility and concise presentation may be desirable. But *novelty* of presentation is the *sine qua non* in this class of publication, and there are no rules to direct the achievement of novelty.

POSITION ADVERTISING

THE forms of advertising so far discussed have various characteristics in common that make it reasonable to gather them into a group. They may be regarded as the mobile armament of the advertiser. There is another group to be considered next that one may call advertising *of position*—as the military experts say of guns fixed permanently in a fortification. The items of this further group are not sent out by mail or distributed *via* publications; they do not *move* to the percipient, they are put in fixed positions; the percipient does the moving—encounters them where they stand and is influenced according to his susceptibilities. (I am speaking, of course, of billboards, window displays, street-car cards, electric signs.) In addition to this tactical difference between mobile advertising and position advertising there are other points of dissimilarity that claim the designer's attention. The designer himself is a different kind of designer. The processes of manufacture are different for the two groups; the work

*The “public”
does the
moving*

*Different
printing*

*Different
artist*

*Different
range*

that the completed forms have to do is different; consequently layout in the one case does not mean the same thing that it does in the other. The mobile advertising forms are made, for the most part, by the century-old process that has been handed down to us as "letterpress" printing—images set off on paper, by pressure, from the tops of bits of metal assembled in a frame. The chief agent in the process is the printer—the assembler of types and the applier of pressure—his is the hand that gives character to the product. Advertising "of position" is almost always made by lithography, quite another art, and the chief agent is the "artist" or draughtsman. The type printer works within rigid limitations—rectangular, incompressible metal is his medium. The lithographer, on the other hand, is as free as a painter with brush and canvas; the only rectilinear lines that limit him are the edges of his paper. The items of the mobile group are intended to be viewed at a distance of (say) eighteen inches; the position group works at longer range—from eight feet to a mile. The designer of position advertising is closer akin to the mural decorator and to the designer of stage settings than he is to the printer. The materials to be manipulated and the processes for handling them are different, but the principles of design that underlie the building of position advertising are identical with those that govern mobile methods; such points as have been developed concerning the one apply directly to the design of the other. This section, therefore, will not rehearse methods of design, but will content itself with a few points about the specific product.

Street-car Cards

WE may bridge the gap between the two methods by way of the street-car card. That fixed form will be manufactured either by lithography or by letterpress

Competition

printing; it is in shoulder-to-shoulder competition with its own kind; the problem of its design makes demands upon the resources of both camps. Four factors control its layout: (1) its shape, a parallelogram, ten by twenty inches horizontally disposed; (2) its *curve* when put into position; (3) its competitive struggle with its neighbors in the rack; and (4) the fact that it is to be seen from a distance of eight feet directly, or from angles up to forty-five degrees from the normal. The chief point of concern for the designer is the competitive factor. (It is assumed that he is foresighted enough to find out what can be read at a distance of eight feet.) The competition is acute. The designer's tactic will be to protect his flanks and to direct attention inward to the center of his area. A ride of a few blocks will provide all the data needed on the point. Color will be one of the designer's chief resources—it may be suggested that the color will often be viewed by artificial light. The color needs to be simple and vigorous. Lettering will be simple, and not entangled with other elements. I think that the designer will cultivate simplicity in general—his competitors will unquestionably lean toward the elaborate.

A glance at the rack in any vehicle where street-car cards are exposed convinces one that, as a genus, they are addicted to uneasy and meaningless motions. Any formal, balanced, dignified arrangement stands out conspicuously. Unity of design is indicated—a design that focuses strongly upon some high point of interest.

The curved shape that a street-car card takes when it is clamped into the rack has two implications for the designer. Forms, normally graceful, are contorted when they are bent into a curve; this distortion does not matter usually, but there are occasions. . . . Owing to the curve of the card, curved lines and slanted lines

*Dignity is
conspicuous*

are not valuable for making the design lively; they are detrimental, indeed. Vertical and horizontal lines are the vigorous lines in street-car card design.

Window Cards

WINDOW displays for retail stores—lithographs, cut-outs, and pasters—call for a kind of ingenuity in their design that is off the beaten typographic track. The standard-pattern window card is a central panel flanked on each side by panels one-half the center panel's width. The side panels are hinged to the middle panel so that the construction can stand by itself like a fire screen. One detail of design has to do with the top edge of this triptych. The "new thing" in window display results from dieing out this top edge in some unexpected shape. From this simple form the window card progresses through changes of increasing complexity until it becomes a miniature stage-setting with cut-out details in two or three planes. The card itself is largely a matter of colored picture. Its attractiveness depends upon the cleverness of the artist. The attention of layout is concentrated upon the fact that the device is intended to work at the distance of a city pavement's width—and upon people who are hurrying by. That gives the cue for the placing and the style of the lettering; the picture takes care of itself. One helpful hint can be provided: A card of this kind in a window is likely to have articles of merchandise standing in front of it; the critical area, therefore, is well above the horizontal center line of the panels.

Pasters Pasters, to be stuck to the inside of window-glass, are too various for any discussion of a general kind. They seldom come into the purview of layout. They are "novelties" and are conceived and executed by a craft that specializes in that kind of thing, working according to its own standards and taste.

The top edge

*Pictorial
artist
controls
the design*

The designer of window-display material will do well to keep in close touch with the designer of stage settings.

Billboards

ALL the points about billboard layout that a theorist is able to adduce can be gathered in a railroad journey of a few miles. The high speed at which transportation moves limits the "dwell" to a space of about three seconds; the placard has to get its work done within that time. The typical railway station "three-sheet" and "one-sheet" are given a longer time to exert an influence.

The "dwell"

Anyone's judgment can supply the formula: The lettering needs to be in horizontal lines, simple and clear, not condensed, and not involved with other features; overelaboration of any of the elements complicates the reading process; ornament does not belong.

Pictures and color carry the burden; the management of color is of prime importance. The idea is communicated mostly by a picture combined with a short phrase. The painter of the pictures controls the layout—or if there is any layout problem otherwise, it is a question of placing the words so that they can be read quickly. Fine points about esthetic space relations are not of much moment. The only point to be discussed is the question of what kind of pictures.

The style in billboard pictures derives from the photograph—runs to literal realistic representation. It would seem that the time provided for looking at a billboard is too short to let much realistic detail get home. One may suppose that pictures would act more rapidly if the lithographic artist took pointers from the mural decorator—*i.e.*, that he might simplify and flatten his design, make it, in fact, a mural decoration done according to the best tenets of that art. The three-

*Style of
picture*

sheet—viewed at closer range and more leisurely—is able to make use of realistic detail. But even the three-sheet will be better bill-posting if it remembers that it is a *poster* and not an oil painting of the conservative school. These comments are outside the limits of layout—gratuitous opinion.

Wood type The accepted billboard style has developed in an atmosphere of its own, outside and away from that region where magazine and direct advertising has been evolved. When type is used it is a type unknown to the modern printing craft—crude block letters, extremely fat or extremely condensed—the style 1840, in fact. The wave of reform that has changed type styles for every other part of the printing trade has not washed the walls of the wood-type studios. The big-space billboard artist, drawing his lettering for each new job, uses a letter that is adequate, and quite often finely designed.

Painted billboard display follows its own tradition and its own taste. It is shut away from the influence of layout.

Signs

Roman inscriptions IF so be the layout expert is called upon to help design a permanent commercial sign he will do well to remember the memorials of Rome with lettering cut in stone. His sign will not often be cut in stone; it will usually be painted; but the stone letters were painted before they were cut. For the purposes of our Western World, no finer models exist for lettering that is to stand permanently than the old Roman capitals. Sign-painting as a craft had good traditions, once—it has not such good traditions now. So it will be hard to find a sign-painter who can reproduce the distinction of Roman inscriptional lettering. But there the finest model stands, and it is good to know what is the best.

PACKAGES

By “packages” I mean containers—the boxes, cans, and bottles that stand on retailers’ shelves. For modern merchandising these packages are root forms—ultimates. Most lines of advertising pressure converge upon packages. A package is the physical embodiment of a trade name, a brand, all the good will and “consumer demand” that an advertising campaign labors to create. Package takes the place of product. The thing inside the box is of less importance than the box. The purchaser’s response is a “conditioned” response. His digestive organs are trained to exude their juices, not at the sight of food, but at the sight of a rectangular pasteboard prism striped with alternate diagonal bands of white and red.

Long-sustained agony attends the birth of a container design. No process in an advertising agency’s service to its client entails more strain and sweat. Consultations without number (or result) with experts in color, form, mass-psychology; experimental dummies sprung upon unsuspecting typists, scrubwomen, wives; codifications of statistics on reaction time, snatching-energy, left- or right-handedness, resistance-persistence; graphs of reaction-to-red, reaction-to-gold, reaction-to-shine; the resolution of all these things into a final perfect package . . . its rejection by the client in favor of a design that he himself evolved in three seconds with half-a-dozen pencil strokes, based upon a competitor’s device. . . .

The advertising designer confronted by the need to originate a package sees the product in two classes arranged according to two stages of performance. One class of package stops at the first stage; another class accomplishes the first stage and then proceeds to enter

*The birth
of a new
package*

The practical function

upon a second. The second functional stage does not call for much attention at the present state of the art, but it will become more important as time goes on.

The first functional stage is concerned with getting the package off the retailer's shelf into the consumer's hands. The container label is required to be a placard, an advertisement, and consequently is called upon to fulfill the requirements of advertisements elsewhere—it has to be conspicuous, legible, unusual enough to be easily remembered. If the wrapping is to be torn off and discarded as soon as the article within is put to use, then the designer's obligation ends with stage I. He has performed his function if he makes a container that is attractive *as advertising*.

As house-decoration

Consider next the case of a commodity that will stand on the kitchen shelf in its original container for a period of time—say a cleaning preparation. The kitchen (in Anglo-Saxon economy) has never been a place where the looks of things mattered; but now, under the present dispensation of high costs and inadequate servants, housewives do occasionally venture into the kitchen. The container standing on the kitchen shelf, then, becomes a part of the decorative scheme of the house. This fact ought to influence the design of container labels. It does not, yet, but it will. And, by an odd twist (unperceived as yet by the producer), a package that makes a pleasant spot in a modern kitchen lays hold of the marketing eye in a retail store.

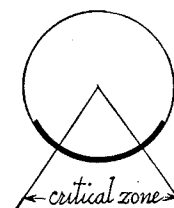
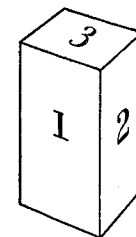
Room for improvement

The second stage of package performance involves the question of decorative design. The design of decoration (*i.e.*, the craft of beautifying things in general, buildings, teaspoons, cities) is not outside the province of the typographical designer, but it is beyond the scope of this compilation. It calls for a treatise all its own, and such treatises are available. Here it will perhaps be wise to confine our efforts to improving pack-

ages as advertising before undertaking to evolve them into objects of art. There is room for improvement within the confines of the first or advertising stage. The art of package design in America in these opening years of the second quarter of the twentieth century is in a less promising state than any other form of advertising. It is on a level with magazine advertising of the year 1885.

Usually containers will occur in two forms—as rectangular prisms (boxes); as cylinders (bottles, cans). Variants will be modifications of these two shapes. The box as a basis of design presents little difficulty. Each one of its six sides will be a field for the designer's endeavor. Area 3 will be of least importance as advertising, 2 will come next, 1 will be the chief region of activity. So far as making a good impression goes, at the instant of "primary reaction" (when the purchaser takes the package into his hands) the three areas are of equal importance—*i.e.*, as *design* all three need to be given adequate attention. 1 is the poster; 2 is a convenient place for directions for use; 3 is "friendship" area, trade-mark, seal, "how-do-you-do" or "hope-to-see-you-again." The cylindrical shape calls for one more point of consideration. Its label is bent into a curve; all parts of it are not conspicuous alike. One-third of the circle can be used as poster, but the essential part of the design will need to be confined within narrower vertical limits than that if the label is to be read on the shelves.

It is obvious that labels for shelf goods need to be broadly treated—simple and large divisions of color, and of text matter. Small, finicking details resolve themselves into an indistinguishable gray at a little distance. Ornate lettering is not in order. Decorative material requires to be in silhouette, masses rather than lines.



Broad treatment



Novel. But
how novel?

Color is a highly important part of the game; but color done large, not broken up into bits. Realistic pictorial treatment is out of place on a container label—both for “art” reasons and for reasons of good advertising. Pictorial elements need to be “broadly” treated, conventionalized into flat, simple areas, not “shaded.” It is easier to make a tomato look round, from a little distance, if it is drawn in three flat colors, than if it is executed with all the lithographer’s art of subtle shading.

How *strange* does a package dare be? Should it step out of the ranks and announce itself as something utterly undreamed of? Or should it follow the fashion of other wares in its category and appear only a trifle different? Even if the campaign that points to it is startling, and the merchandise itself appeals on a point of novelty, should the *package* be novel? If it is a new soap, should it dress as an utterly new soap, or as soap in general? A package is not only an inducement to buy (an advertisement), but the thing bought, the merchandise itself. Will an intending purchaser hesitate if the package is unlike anything he has seen before? This question always comes up when a new article is being groomed for the market. It divides the experts into contending schools. It is vital—and insoluble except by trial.

Certain luxuries—perfumes, for example—rely upon unusual containers to proclaim their distinction. In such regions one may go as far as inspiration carries. But in the department of commodities one is inclined to think that conspicuous novelty involves a risk. The public has a preconceived idea of how such things should look; the designer dares not depart too far from that idea. But the state of the package-designing craft makes him feel sure that he ought to depart somewhat.

STATIONERY

THE layout man comes in contact with certain classes of product that are not advertising in the strict sense, but that serve advertising purposes as part of their function; such things as letter-heads, labels, trade-marks, etc. Some of these items—letter-heads—fall within the influence of the layout man’s art; some of them—trade-marks—are furnished him as raw material.

Letter-heads

THE letter-head part of a business letter performs two functions: (1) It provides information about the firm—where it is, what people manage it, what is its main line of activity. (2) Besides this purely practical work, a letter-head is required to transmit a *tone* to the reader of the letter, a hint of the firm’s enviable position in the mercantile world. A letter-head, therefore, is an advertisement *in petto*, a sort of epitome of advertising in general; it conveys information, and it gives to the information a particular sonority that is supposed to ravish the listener’s ear.

The place where a letter-head is most likely to fail as a practical instrument is the street address. The street number needs to be stated plainly, in arabic numerals, large enough to be read—not spelled out in words or otherwise complicated. This injunction may seem too simple for record, but if you examine the letter-heads that come in you will see what an extraordinary amount of misdirected ingenuity is spent on obscuring this feature of the instrument.

The obvious way of arranging the elements of a letter-head is the practical way—so obvious and so practical that most letter-heads are cast in that form—the firm name, the street and number, the city and

An
ambassador

Address
plain

The layout
problem